



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Evaluating Child Support Agency case closure communications in nil- assessed and non- compliant cases

December 2016

DWP ad hoc research report no. 39

A report of research carried out by ICM Unlimited on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions.

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Summary

The Child Support Agency (CSA) Case Closure process is supported by a series of mails to both the parents with care (PWC) and the non resident parents (NRP) informing them when case closure will occur and further associated detail.

The research company ICM Unlimited was contracted to investigate client understanding of and the impact of some of the mailouts, i.e. Mailing One and Mailing Three, in addition to understanding client awareness of the case closure process before it started. The research was directed at Segments One and Two clients, Nil assessed and Non-compliant, out of the five planned case closure segments. Six surveys were carried out, three for Segment One and three for Segment Two, comprising 800 interviews each at:

1. Baseline – before case closure had started
2. Mailing One – six months before case closure and
3. Mailing Three – when a client's CSA regular maintenance arrangement ends (arrears payments may continue at this stage).

The outcomes of these six surveys comprise the content of this publication.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Acknowledgements..... | 6 |
| Authors | 7 |
| Glossary..... | 8 |
| Acronyms..... | 10 |
| Executive Summary | 11 |
| 1.1 Overall findings..... | 11 |
| 1.2 Segment One clients..... | 11 |
| 1.3 Segment Two clients..... | 11 |
| 1.4 Summary | 12 |
| 2 Introduction..... | 14 |
| 2.1 Background..... | 14 |
| 2.2 Communications campaign | 15 |
| 2.3 Aims and objectives of the research..... | 16 |
| 2.4 Methodology..... | 18 |
| 2.5 Statistical significance and confidence intervals | 20 |
| 2.6 Report structure..... | 20 |
| 3 Overall awareness of changes to the CSA when letters have not been received | 22 |
| 3.1 Awareness of Child Maintenance Options | 22 |
| 3.2 Awareness of Case Closures..... | 22 |
| 3.3 Sources of information about Case Closures | 24 |
| 4 Case Closure Awareness Post-Mailings | 26 |
| 4.1 Letter receipt and recall..... | 26 |
| 4.2 Awareness of changes to the CSA..... | 27 |
| 4.2.1 Segment One | 27 |
| 4.2.2 Segment Two | 28 |
| 4.3 Information and message recall from mailings | 28 |

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 4.3.1 | Reading the letter..... | 29 |
| 4.3.2 | Unprompted message recall from the mailings | 30 |
| | Prompted message recall from the mailings | 33 |
| 4.3.4 | Alternative sources of information about case closure | 35 |
| 5 | Knowledge of Arrangements | 37 |
| 5.1 | Knowledge of arrangements | 37 |
| 5.2 | Awareness of how to set up arrangements | 39 |
| 5.3 | Segment One | 39 |
| 5.3.1 | Segment Two | 41 |
| 5.4 | Sources of information about arrangements | 42 |
| 5.4.1 | Segment One | 42 |
| 5.4.2 | Segment Two..... | 43 |
| 6 | Action Taken | 45 |
| 6.1 | Action Taken or Intended | 45 |
| 6.1.1 | Segment One Action Taken | 45 |
| 7 | Conclusions | 48 |
| 7.1 | Recommendations for future communications..... | 49 |
| 8 | Appendix A: Further survey information on Prompted message recall from the mailings | 50 |
| 9 | Appendix B: Survey sampling, fieldwork outcomes and weighting..... | 53 |
| 9.1 | Survey sampling, opt-outs and response rates for surveys | 53 |
| 10 | Appendix C: Survey Profile of respondents | 54 |
| 10.1 | Segment One | 54 |
| 10.1.1 | Baseline | 54 |
| 10.1.2 | Mailing One | 55 |
| 10.1.3 | Mailing Three..... | 56 |
| 10.2 | Segment Two | 57 |
| 10.2.1 | Baseline | 57 |
| 10.2.2 | Mailing One | 58 |
| 10.2.3 | Mailing Three..... | 59 |
| 11 | Appendix D: Statistical significance and confidence intervals | 60 |
| 12 | Appendix E: Communications Timetable | 61 |

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Authors

Gregor Jackson, Research Director, leads ICM's public sector and social research team. He was the project director responsible for all elements of the study including the fieldwork materials and quality of outputs.

Natalie Compas, Senior Research Executive, was the project manager for this study.

Glossary

| Term | Definition |
|--|---|
| Child Maintenance Options | An impartial information and support service started in 2008 to help parents make decisions about child maintenance arrangements. |
| Child Maintenance Service | The government has introduced a new statutory Child Maintenance Service for parents who are unable to make a Family-based arrangement. It is also referred to as the 2012 scheme. |
| Child Support Agency | A government agency responsible for the assessing and collecting of compulsory child maintenance payments. The Child Support Agency (CSA) only deals with existing cases. New applications are dealt with by the Child Maintenance Service. |
| Collect and Pay arrangements | A case is classed as 'Collect and Pay' when the maintenance calculation has been derived by the CMS (after assessment of the case) and the paying parent pays child maintenance to the CMS. The CMS then sends this money to the receiving parent. This was known as 'Calculation and Collection' under the old scheme. There is a one-off application fee plus a collection charge for each payment. |
| Consent order/Minute of agreement | Arrangement usually made with the help of solicitors. Minutes of agreement are only available in Scotland. |
| Direct Pay arrangement | This is where the maintenance calculation has been derived by the CMS (after assessment of the case). The paying parent pays child maintenance directly to the receiving parent. Both parents agree between themselves when and how payments are made. There is a one off £20 application fee, but no collection charges. |
| Family-based arrangement | Where both parents agree between themselves how to continue providing for a child after they separate, without involving the Child Support Agency. Also known as a voluntary agreement or private agreement. |
| Segment One Clients | Clients who are Nil assessed: CSA cases where a case has been assessed but the maintenance amount is set at £0. |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Segment Two Clients | Clients who are Non-compliant. CSA cases where the paying parent was liable for maintenance but was not paying. |
| Non-Resident Parent | The parent who lives in a separate household from the child/ren. In this report the term non-resident parent may refer to either a Child Support Agency client or Child Maintenance Options customer. (Now known as Paying Parent.) |
| Parent With Care | The parent who lives in the same household as the child/ren for whom maintenance has been applied for/or is being paid. In this report the term parent with care may refer to either a Child Support Agency client or Child Maintenance Options customer. (Now known as Receiving Parent.) |
| Nil Assessed | The case has been assessed and the Non-Resident Parent has a liability for Child Maintenance, but the payment amount has been assessed as £0. These cases arise when, at the time of the assessment, the NRP has a low income, e.g. because they are a student, in prison or in a care home |
| Non compliant | Cases where the case has been assessed and the Non-Resident Parent has a liability for Child Maintenance, with a payment amount over one pound, but where no payments are being made. |

Acronyms

| Acronym | Definition |
|------------|---|
| CATI | Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing |
| CMS | Child Maintenance Service |
| CSA | Child Support Agency |
| DWP | Department for Work and Pensions |
| NRP | Non-resident parent |
| PWC | Parent with Care |
| CM Options | Child Maintenance Options |
| CS2 | Data repository to record CSA cases from 2003 to 2012 |
| CSCS | Data repository to record CSA cases from 1993 to 2003 |

Executive Summary

1.1 Overall findings

This executive summary presents the findings from a research programme conducted among nil assessed CSA clients (Segment One) and non-compliant CSA clients (Segment Two). Three waves of research were conducted with each audience: one before they received their first letter informing them of the closure of the CSA (i.e. Baseline survey); one after the first letter (i.e. Mailing One) and one after the third letter (Mailing Three). Each wave of research comprises a representative telephone sample of 800 Segment One or Segment Two clients.

While the segments differ in their case characteristics, the findings within each audience were nearly identical. Overall, it is evident that as DWP sent out further mailings both Segment One and Segment Two clients became more aware of the changes. The likelihood of parents taking action and their intention to take action to make a child maintenance arrangement also increased throughout the mailings, although by Mailing 3 the majority had not taken any action.

1.2 Segment One clients

Over the course of research amongst Segment One parents, awareness of changes to the CSA increased, even amongst those who said they had not received or seen the mailings. At the Baseline survey, one in ten (11 per cent) clients had heard, read or seen something about changes to the CSA. This increased to almost 18 per cent amongst those who had not seen the letter at Mailing One, to almost a third (32 per cent) at Mailing Three amongst these clients. This shows that even without the mailings, there is an increase in awareness of changes to cases.

1.3 Segment Two clients

Amongst Segment Two clients, awareness of changes to the CSA increased throughout the research as it did with Segment One parents, even amongst those who said they had not received or seen the mailings. At the Baseline survey, 14 per cent of clients had heard, read or seen something about changes to the CSA. This increased to 20 per cent amongst those who had not seen the letter at Mailing One, and then to 45 per cent at Mailing Three. Like Segment One clients this shows that even without the mailings, there was an increase in awareness of changes to cases.

1.4 Summary

- The findings amongst Segment One and Segment Two clients are broadly similar. This consistency across both segments suggests that **indirect communications, as well as informal mechanisms, are** increasing awareness of case closure and the associated changes.
- At all stages of the research and within both segments, **the majority of parents recalled receiving the letters**. PWCs were significantly more likely than NRPs to recall receiving a letter.
- In both segments, **those who had received the Mailing One letter were significantly more likely to be aware of case closure than those who said they had not received the letter**. PWCs were also significantly more likely to be aware of the CSA case closures at this stage, compared to NRPs. This suggests that the initial mailing did have a positive impact on the awareness of cases closing and the overall closure of the CSA.
- PWCs were significantly more likely to have read the letters at both mailings compared to NRPs. Nonetheless, the **majority of clients in both segments read at least some of the letters**.
- At both Mailing One and Mailing Three, **PWCs were more likely to have greater recall of all messages than NRPs**. However, **few respondents spontaneously recalled messages** suggesting that this information had not fully resonated with clients.
- **Recall of all messages increased once parents had read Mailing Three**. Most of these relate to changes occurring to the CSA rather than messages relating to applications to the CMS for new arrangements or contacting CM Options.
- Segment One clients tend to have seen **information about case closures in the letter**, or could not remember seeing any other information. Others found information about case closure from other sources, especially via the internet and television, but also family and friends, CSA caseworkers, national newspapers, Jobcentres and the radio. Nonetheless, a high proportion could not remember or did not know if they had seen information elsewhere.
- Regardless of whether clients were nil assessed (Segment One) or non-compliant (Segment Two), **knowledge of the different types of child maintenance arrangements increased significantly throughout mailings**. This shows that while some parents may be still unclear on what case closure means, direct mailings had a significant impact on awareness of the services and arrangements that are available to parents.
- During both the Baseline and Mailing One surveys, parents who were aware of each arrangement were asked if they **knew how to set up the new Child Maintenance arrangements** and whether they already had one set up. Awareness of how to set up arrangements increased between Baseline and Mailing One surveys although this improvement was not always significant.

- Within both segments, the majority of clients had **not taken action due to their case closing** although those who had read the letters were more likely to have taken some sort of action at both mailings. Neither nil assessed nor non-compliant clients have maintenance flowing and this may influence their attitudes and actions towards child maintenance making them less engaged. Actions taken range from calling CM Options to discussing the situation with the other parent and setting up a new child maintenance arrangement.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for the child maintenance system in Great Britain. The DWP operates the statutory child maintenance schemes (Child Support Agency (CSA) and Child Maintenance Service (CMS)) and funds Child Maintenance (CM) Options, a national service which provides information and support for separating parents.

The 2012 Paper – “Supporting separated families; securing children’s futures”¹, sets out the Government’s vision for the new child maintenance landscape. In December 2012 DWP launched the new Child Maintenance System (CMS). Part of this saw the introduction of the new statutory CMS for parents who are not able to make their own arrangements. This service has replaced the CSA for new applications. From June 2014 CSA clients were told their current CSA case will close. The case closure process (where clients will be invited to have a conversation with CM Options and are encouraged to consider a new arrangement suitable to their current circumstance) will take approximately three years.

Cases are being closed in five different segments over this three year period. Each segment has differing case characteristics:

Table 2.1 - Case closure timings²

| Segments | Segment description | Segment case closure duration |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Segment One | Nil assessed | Dec '14 – Aug '15 |
| Segment Two | Non-compliant | July '15 – Nov '15 |
| Segment Three | Clerical | Nov '15 – Feb '16 |
| Segment Four | Compliant | Nov '15 – May '17 |
| Segment Five | Enforcement | May '17 – Sept '17 |

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265174/childrens-futures-consultation-response.pdf

² The segment specific scheduling for case closure was correct when drafting the report. In the interim it may have been updated to accommodate changes in the case closure process.

In addition, a series of service charges for the use of the CMS statutory service have been introduced to provide a financial incentive for parents to make their own child maintenance arrangements. These charges do not apply to cases on the 1993 and 2003 CSA schemes – but rather to new applications to the CMS which commenced in mid-2012.

2.2 Communications campaign

As a consequence of the closure of the CSA and creation of the CMS, an ongoing programme of communications activity around case closure is being conducted during the case closure period. The objectives of this activity are to:

- Raise awareness of case closure before letters arrive.
- Raise awareness of case closure through partners and social media.
- Maximise the number of clients who take action following receipt of letters.
- Maximise the number of clients who make a Family-based arrangement following receipt of letters.

Clients are being contacted via a variety of direct and indirect communications to inform them of the changes to child maintenance as well as of their individual case closure.

Letters³ informing parents that their CSA case will close and that child maintenance is changing and they need to make a new arrangement are sent to clients at three stages of CSA case closure.

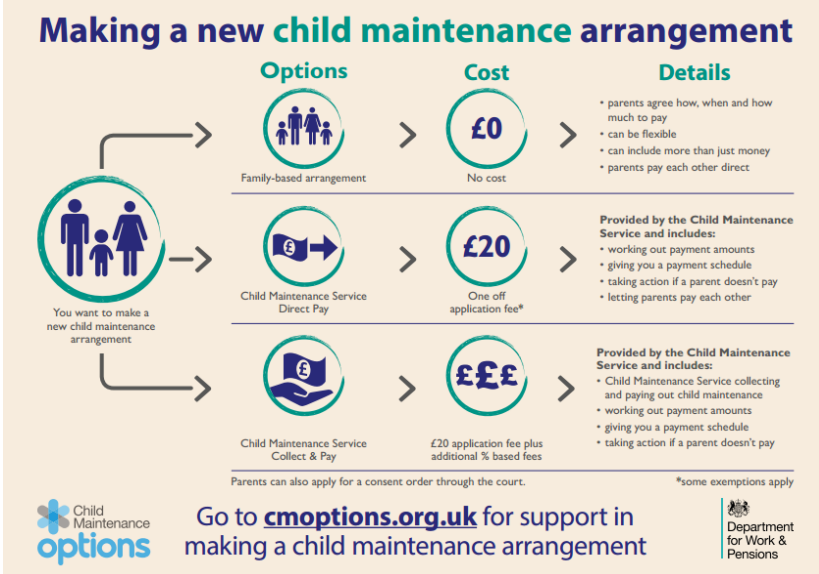
- **Mailing One** - sent to clients as a first contact, letting them know their existing child maintenance arrangement for their case(s) will end on [end of liability date], i.e. in six months' time.
- **Mailing Two** - sent to clients as a reminder of their date 30 days before case closure as a reminder of cases being closed.
- **Mailing Three** - sent to clients to inform them that their case had been closed, immediately after the date. For those with debt or arrears on their case, there case may not have been closed when they received these letters.

These mailings are sent to both NRP and PWC clients with relevant information for their case closure date.

In addition, a variety of indirect communications were distributed to inform clients of case closure. Advertising, television features and government communications were distributed via a variety of media to further increase awareness of case closures.

³ <http://www.cmoptions.org/stakeholdertoolkit/ending-csa.asp>

Indirect communications included infographics and booklets which were sent to parents, examples of which can be seen below:



Making a new child maintenance arrangement

| Options | Cost | Details |
|---|---|---|
| Family-based arrangement (Icon: Family) | £0 No cost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> parents agree how, when and how much to pay can be flexible can include more than just money parents pay each other direct |
| Child Maintenance Service Direct Pay (Icon: Money arrow) | £20 One off application fee* | <p>Provided by the Child Maintenance Service and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> working out payment amounts giving you a payment schedule taking action if a parent doesn't pay letting parents pay each other |
| Child Maintenance Service Collect & Pay (Icon: Money book) | £££ £20 application fee plus additional % based fees | <p>Provided by the Child Maintenance Service and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Maintenance Service collecting and paying out child maintenance working out payment amounts giving you a payment schedule taking action if a parent doesn't pay |

Parents can also apply for a consent order through the court.

*some exemptions apply

Go to cmoptions.org.uk for support in making a child maintenance arrangement

Child Maintenance options

Department for Work & Pensions

Other indirect communications which clients may have come across include:

- Awareness raising adverts placed by DWP in the press or online
- Adverts placed by DWP on commercial radio
- Press coverage regarding changes – not necessarily directly linked to DWP communications
- Information released by partner and stakeholder organisations
- Word of mouth from friends, family or other affected clients
- The gov.uk or cmoptions.org websites.

2.3 Aims and objectives of the research

DWP commissioned ICM Unlimited to undertake a programme of quantitative research to measure the effectiveness of communications during the case closure process, with Segments One (nil assessed) and Two (non compliant) clients.

The insight from this research focuses on clients in case closure Segments One and Two and does not attempt to measure awareness among the wider CSA population. This research will enable DWP to refine communications for later case closure segments.

The research looks at awareness of case closure and the resulting child maintenance activity, from pre-mailings (Baseline), as well as awareness, understanding and effectiveness of mailings at the first mailing (Mailing One) and third mailing (Mailing Three).

A separate project was commissioned by DWP to evaluate the impact of the case closure programme itself looking at how many clients went on to make maintenance arrangements.

The key objectives of this research were to understand:

Awareness campaign

Before the letters had been sent out:

- Whether clients have seen/heard about case closure through supporting communications.
- Whether clients understand what action they need to take as a result of supporting communications.
- Whether clients understand the timeframe for the closure of their case through supporting communications.
- What influence external communications have on clients' decision making.
- Whether clients have taken any action, and what action they have taken, as a result of external communications.
- Whether clients' intentions (regarding child maintenance) had changed as a result of supporting communications.

Direct mail campaign

Following the mailing of letters to clients:

- Whether clients have received the relevant mailings.
- Whether clients understand what action they need to take as a result of the mailings (i.e. to ensure payment continuity, to manage arrears).
- Whether clients understand the timeframe for the closure of their case through mailed communications.
- What influence the mailings have on clients' decision making.
- Whether clients have taken any action, and what action they have taken, as a result of the mailings.
- Clients' intentions (regarding child maintenance) as a result of the mailings.

All communications

Across all communications activity:

- Which channels (direct mail or awareness raising) reach and engage the most clients.
- Which mechanisms are the most successful at driving clients towards Family-based arrangements.
- Which messages are the most successful at driving clients towards Family-based arrangements.

- What other factors influence clients' decision making, such as other organisations and individuals.

2.4 Methodology

This research was conducted via six surveys over the course of fifteen months, between September 2014 and December 2015.

Each survey was conducted with a representative sample of about 800 Segment One and 800 Segment Two clients, equally split by parent type and gender.

All interviews were conducted via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) using sample records supplied to ICM by DWP. The average questionnaire length was ten minutes.

For each segment, three surveys were conducted at three key points in the communications process.

- **Baseline** surveys were conducted with clients who had not yet received any mailings to understand awareness before direct communications were received.
- **Mailing One** surveys were conducted with those who had received the first mailing within four weeks of the mailing being sent.
- **Mailing Three** surveys were conducted once the third mailing had been sent. These interviews were conducted between four and six weeks of the third mailing being received.

Fieldwork dates and base sizes for each survey are outlined below. Please note that due to restrictions on research activity before and during the general election 2015, interviewing was paused for Segment One, Mailing Three clients between 30th March 2015 and 1st June 2015.

Segment One

- Baseline: 800 interviews conducted between 1st September 2014 and 6th October 2014.
- Mailing One: 805 interviews conducted between 8th October 2014 and 31st December 2014.
- Mailing Three: 800 interviews conducted between 26th February 2015 and 27th July 2015.

Segment Two

- Baseline: 800 interviews conducted between 7th January 2015 and 2nd February 2015.
- Mailing One: 805 interviews conducted between 18th June 2015 and 24th July 2015.

- Mailing Three: 800 interviews conducted between 6th October 2015 and 27th November 2015.

The data after each wave of research has been weighted back to the profile of the target Segment One or Segment Two audience. Further details about the weighting process and weights are appended.

Interpreting the data

Findings are trended where possible from Baseline through to Mailing Three for each segment, to show changes in awareness and understanding throughout this research project.

Where possible, findings amongst Segment One and Segment Two parents have been compared against each other.

Presenting the data

When presenting tables, for example comparing segments and mailings, for a survey question only the table with the highest number of statistically significant variables will be displayed to support telling the story.

2.5 Statistical significance and confidence intervals

The respondents to each of the six surveys are samples of the total CSA case closure Segments One and Two client “population”. Therefore we cannot be certain that the survey figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody in either Segment One or Segment Two had been interviewed (the “true” values). We can, however, statistically predict the variation between the sample results and the “true” values from knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95 per cent - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “95 per cent confidence interval”.

Table 2.2 Sampling tolerances

| Size of sample on which survey result is based | Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels | | |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|
| | Statistical Reliability | | |
| | 10% / 90% | 30% / 70% | 50% / 50% |
| 50 interviews | 8.4 | 12.8 | 14.0 |
| 78 interviews | 6.7 | 10.2 | 11.2 |
| 100 interviews | 5.9 | 9.0 | 9.8 |
| 400 interviews | 2.9 | 4.5 | 4.9 |
| 500 interviews | 2.6 | 4.0 | 4.4 |
| 800 interviews | 2.1 | 3.2 | 3.5 |

For example, with a sample of 800 where 30 per cent give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 (95 per cent confidence level) that the “true” value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points (+/-3.2 per cent) from the sample result. Similarly referring to the table above in a sample of 78 where 30 per cent give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the “true” value will fall within the range of plus or minus 10.2 percentage points (+/-10.2 per cent).

2.6 Report structure

Following this introduction Chapters two to five outline the findings from the six waves of research conducted among Segment One and Segment Two clients.

Chapter six outlines conclusions, recommendations and analysis based on the findings throughout the surveys.

Appendix A contains reporting not contained in the main report. Technical appendices B and C detail sampling and response rates for all six surveys. Appendix D contains a note on statistical significance while appendix E shows the communications timetable.

3 Overall awareness of changes to the CSA when letters have not been received

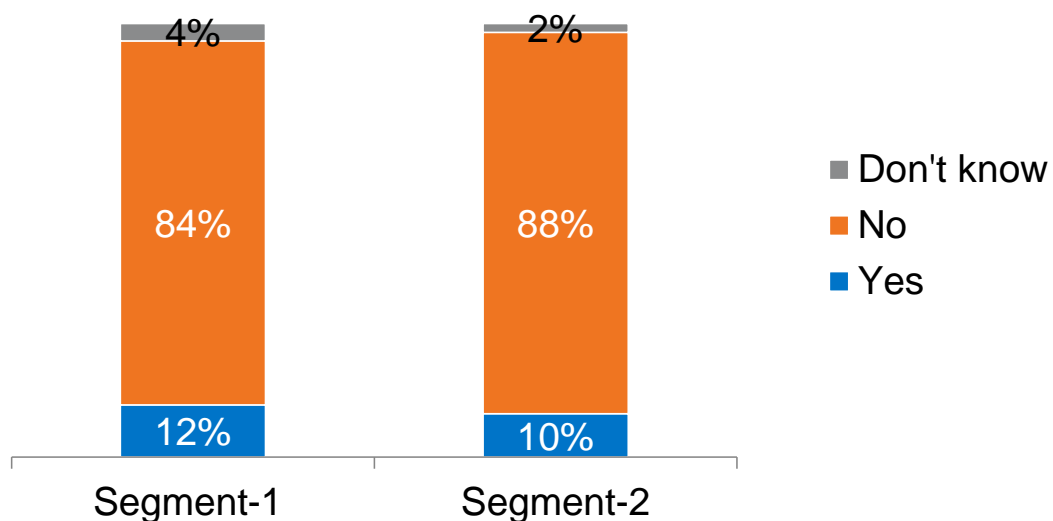
3.1 Awareness of Child Maintenance Options

The Baseline survey comprised clients prior to the start of case closure. In the Baseline research, respondents in both segments were asked whether they knew of the Child Maintenance Options (CM Options) service.

The vast majority of respondents were not aware of CM Options (84 per cent in Segment One and 88 per cent in Segment Two).

Figure 3.1 Awareness of CM Options

Q12. Have you heard of the Child Maintenance Options service? (Single code question)



Base: All Baseline Segment-1 (800) and Segment-2 (800)

3.2 Awareness of Case Closures

To gauge awareness of case closure before mailings had been sent, baseline respondents were asked if they had heard, read or seen anything relating to case closure.

The majority (88 per cent) of Segment One clients had not heard, read or seen anything about changes to the CSA.

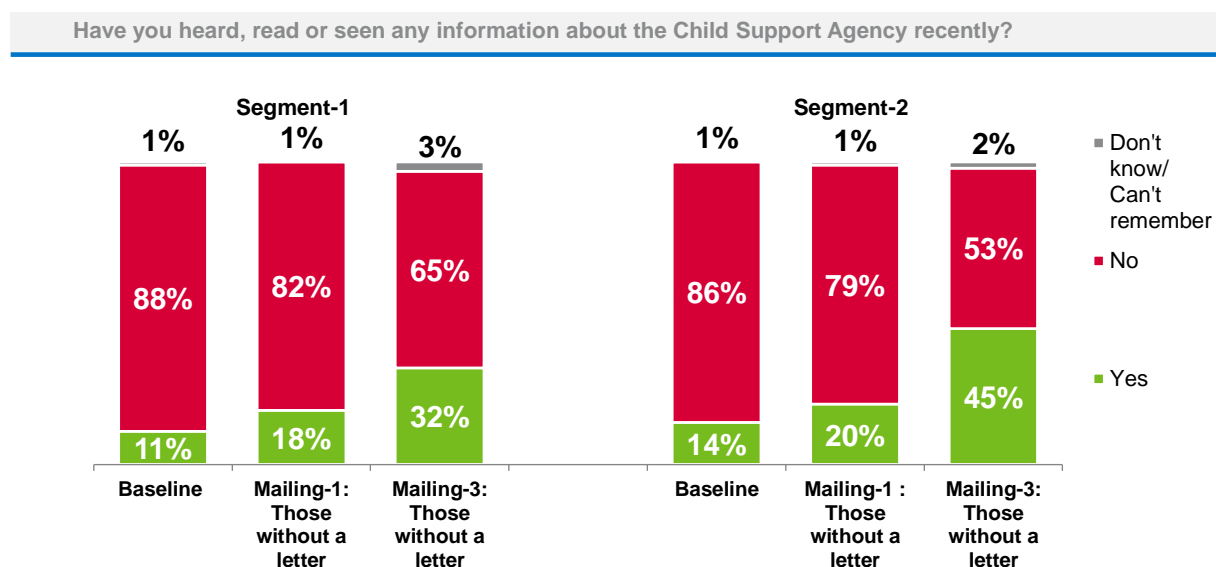
A similar picture emerges with Segment Two clients. During the Baseline research only a minority of clients were aware of changes to the CSA (14 per cent); the majority (86 per cent), were unaware.

Awareness of changes to the CSA among Segment One clients who were sent letters and leaflets at Mailings One and Three (but said they had not received them) grew over the mailings when compared to the Baseline stage: just 11 per cent in the Baseline research and then 18 per cent after Mailing One and then to 32 per cent after Mailing Three.

Similar to Segment One, there was also increased awareness among Segment Two clients who were sent letters and leaflets at Mailings One and Three (but said they had not seen or received them) throughout the research programme. The proportions tripled from the Baseline to Mailing Three waves (from 14 per cent to 45 per cent).

The mirroring of results seen in both segments seems to suggest that indirect communications, as well as informal mechanisms, are also working at increasing awareness of case closure and the associated changes.

Figure 3.2 Awareness of changes to the CSA



Base: Baseline: All Baseline Segment-1 respondents (800); Segment-2 respondents (800)

Base: Mailing-1: All Mailing-1 who did not receive a letter and leaflet Segment-1 (189); Segment-2 (173)

Base: Mailing-3: All Mailing-3 who did not receive a letter Segment-1 (170); Segment-2 (163)

3.3 Sources of information about Case Closures

Clients interviewed at the Baseline stage who had heard, read or seen something about the CSA mention a number of sources of information, ranging from formal to informal mechanisms.

As these questions are only based on those who had heard, read or seen something in the Baseline survey, they are based on relatively small sample sizes. As such, where base sizes are below 100, data are given as both percentages and numbers.

Table 3.1 Respondent numbers who had heard, read or seen something in the Baseline survey

| Survey | Unweighted number of respondents | Percentage of total survey sample |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Segment One Baseline | 78 | 9.8% |
| Segment Two Baseline | 106 | 13.3% |

While the base sizes are large enough for analysis, **caution should be taken when looking at the following results in section 3.3.**

For Segment One the **most cited sources of information** were television (17 per cent), national newspapers (14 per cent), family or friends (12 per cent) and specific websites searched online (also 12 per cent).

Similar sources of information were mentioned by Segment Two clients. The most frequently cited were social media (23 per cent), television (22 per cent), CSA Caseworkers (20 per cent), family or friends and searched for websites (both 12 per cent).

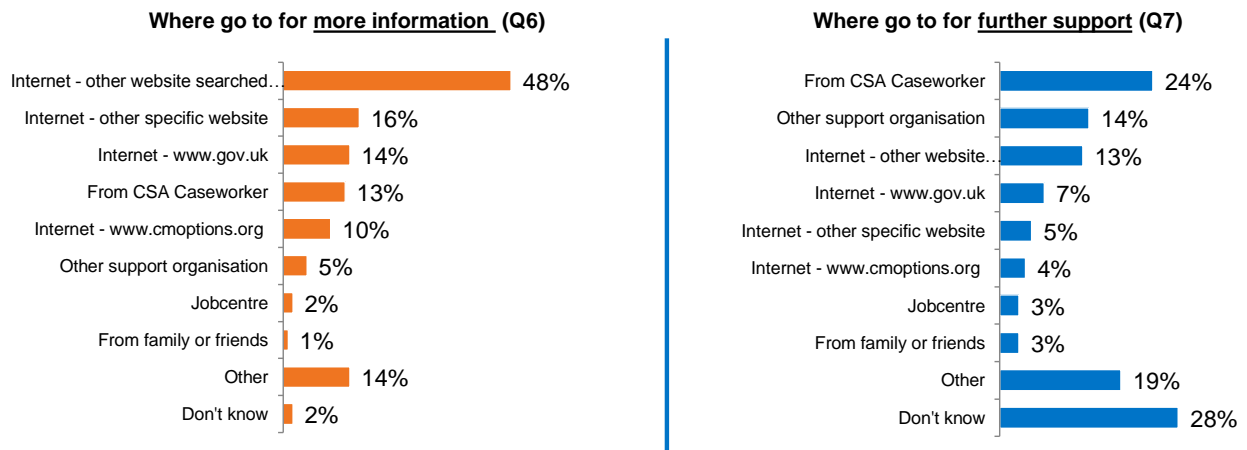
Segment One

Of those who heard, read or saw something about the CSA, further action that some of these clients intended to take was to look for more information via the internet, for example, a half intended to search for a website online – see Figure 3.3.

For further support, clients said they would go to their CSA Caseworker (24 per cent) or another support organisation (14 per cent). However, more than a quarter (28 per cent) said they would not know where to go for further support.

Figure 3.3 Segment One - Obtaining further information and support

Q6. Where would you go to find further information? / Q7. Where would you go if you needed further support?



Base: All Baseline Segment-1 respondents who had heard, read or seen something (78)

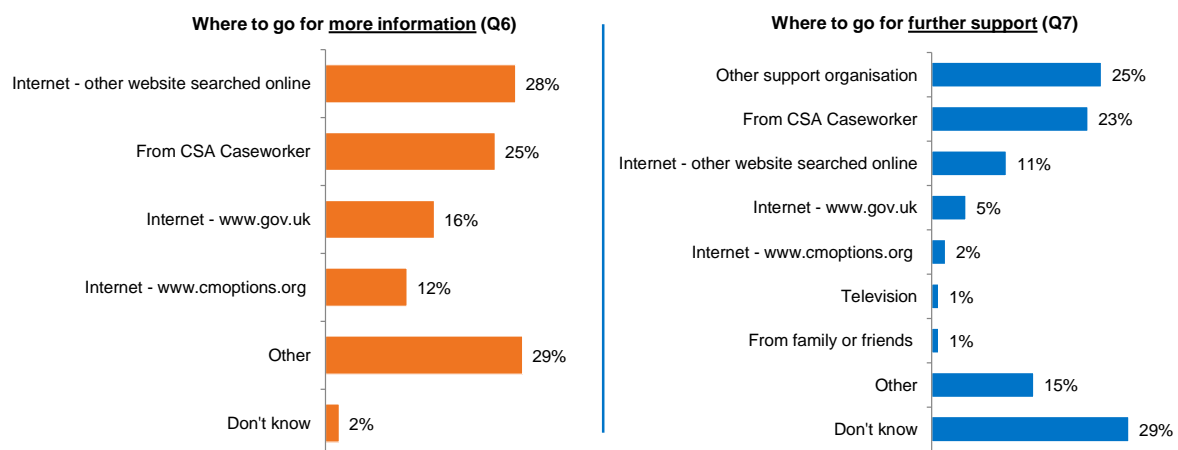
Segment Two

Consistent with Segment One clients, internet searches featured highly as a method for sourcing more information (28 per cent) for Segment Two clients. However, CSA caseworkers were also cited as prominent sources of information for clients (25 per cent).

A slightly higher proportion of Segment Two clients would go to another support organisation for support (25 per cent) than those who would go to their CSA Caseworker (23 per cent). But as with Segment One a third did not know where to go to for support (29 per cent).

Figure 3.4 Segment Two - Obtaining further information and support

Q6. Where would you go to find further information? (Multi code) / Q7. Where would you go if you needed further support? (Multi code)



Base: All Segment Two respondents who have read, heard or seen something about the CSA (106)

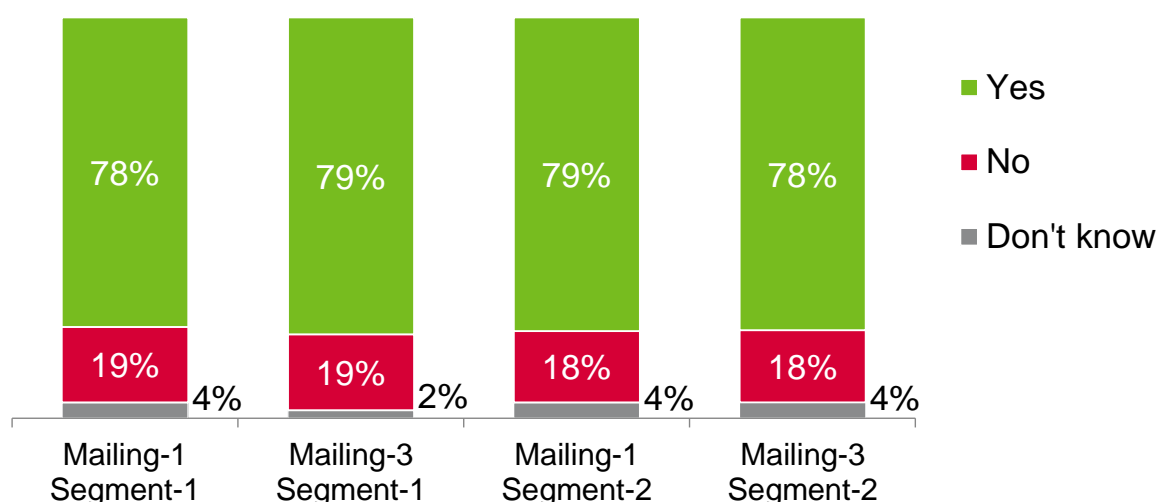
4 Case Closure Awareness Post-Mailings

4.1 Letter receipt and recall

At both Mailings One and Three when surveyed, parents were asked whether or not they recalled receiving the letters that were sent to them.

Figure 4.1 Recollection of receipt of mailing 1 and 3 letters

Q1. First of all, please can I just check if you have received a letter and leaflet recently from the Child Support Agency detailing changes to the Agency?



Base: All Mailing-1 Segment-1 respondents (805); All Mailing-3 Segment-1 respondents (800)

Base: All Mailing-1 Segment-2 respondents (808); All Mailing-3 Segment-2 respondents (800)

At all stages of the research, the majority (78-79 per cent) of parents recalled receiving the letters. PWCs were significantly more likely to recall receiving a letter than NRPs. This divide may highlight the differing levels of engagement between parent types, rather than non-receipt of the letters (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Percentage who recall receiving a letter

| | Mailing One-1 Segment One | Mailing One Segment Two | Mailing Three Segment One | Mailing Three Segment Two |
|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Parent type: | | | | |
| PWC | 88% | 84% | 91% | 90% |
| NRP | 64% | 73% | 65% | 66% |

Base: All Mailing One Segment One respondents (805); All Mailing Three Segment One respondents (800)

4.2 Awareness of changes to the CSA

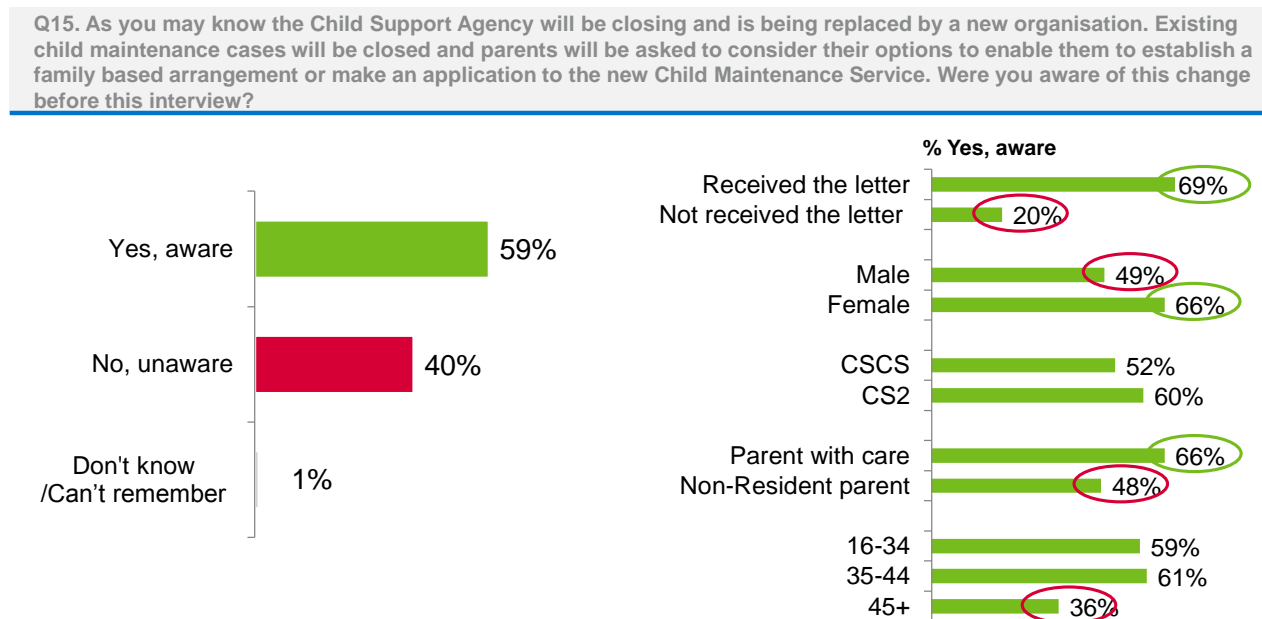
Awareness of changes to the CSA including case closure, was asked of all clients participating in the Mailing One surveys. Mailing One letters were sent six months before parents' cases were closed to initially inform parents of changes to the CSA and case closure.

Survey respondents were asked if they were aware that the CSA would be closing and replaced by a new organisation. The following sections outline the awareness of these changes amongst all respondents in the Mailing One research.

4.2.1 Segment One

At Mailing One, 59 per cent of Segment One parents were aware that the CSA would be closing.

Figure 4.2 Awareness of changes before the survey interview



Base: All Mailing-1 Segment-1 respondents (805)

Those who had received the letter were significantly more likely to be aware of case closures than those who had not received the letter (69 per cent versus 20 per cent).

PWCs were also significantly more likely to be aware of the CSA closure. Two in three PWCs were aware of case closure (66 per cent) compared to almost a half of NRPs (48 per cent).

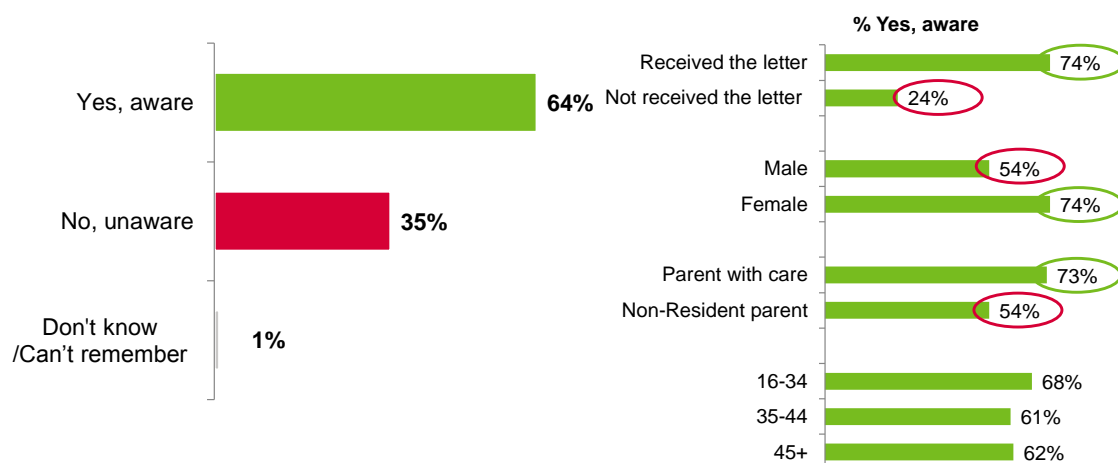
Older parents were significantly less likely to be aware of changes compared to younger parents. Just over a third of parents aged over 45 were aware of changes (36 per cent) compared to 59 per cent of parents aged 16-34 and 61 per cent of 35-44 year olds.

4.2.2 Segment Two

At Mailing One, a slightly higher proportion of Non-compliant clients were aware of CSA closure compared to the Nil assessed. Overall, close to two-thirds (64 per cent) of parents were aware that the CSA would close, compared to a third (35 per cent) who were unaware and just one per cent who did not know.

Figure 4.3 Awareness of changes before the survey interview

Q15. As you may know the Child Support Agency will be closing and is being replaced by a new organisation. Existing child maintenance cases will be closed and parents will be asked to consider their options to enable them to establish a family based arrangement or make an application to the new Child Maintenance Service. Were you aware of this change before this interview?



Base: All Mailing-1 Segment-2 respondents (808)

Again, those who recalled receiving the letter were significantly more likely to be aware of case closure. Three quarters (74 per cent) of parents who had received the letter were aware compared to almost one quarter (24 per cent) who did not recall receiving the letter.

This suggests that the initial mailing did have a positive impact on the awareness of case closures and the overall closure of the CSA.

In Segment Two there were no significant differences between parents of different ages.

4.3 Information and message recall from mailings

Parents who had received a letter were asked to recall messages from the mailings that they had received. These questions were asked unprompted and prompted to gauge what messages respondents could remember themselves, as well as what messages they could recall when a list was read to them.

4.3.1 Reading the letter

Respondents were asked what amount of information they had read in the letters. Answers were quantified into one of the following categories:

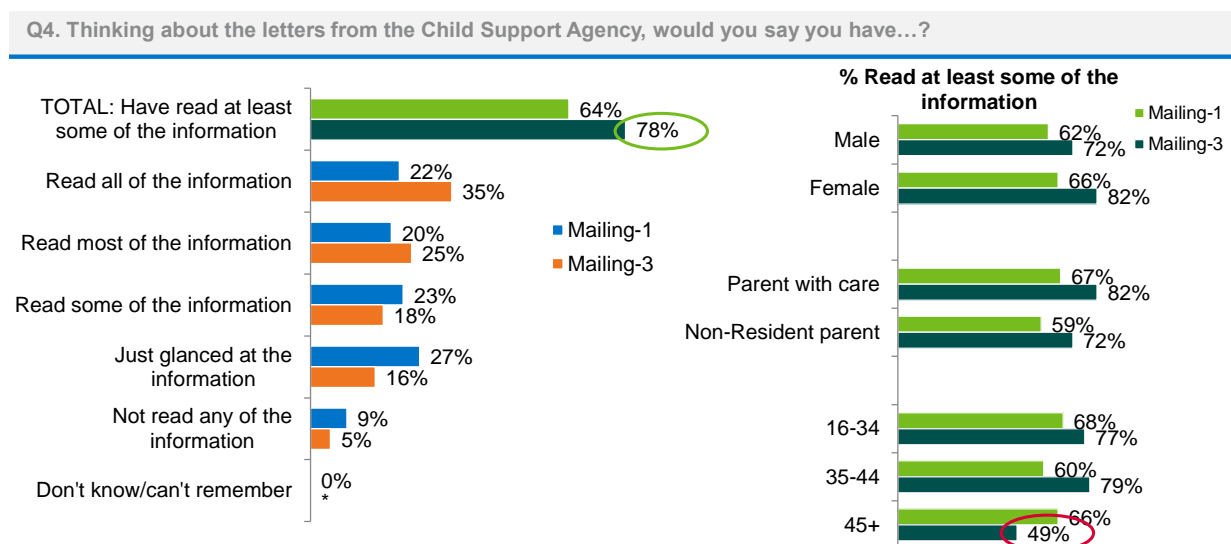
1. Read all of the information
2. Read most of the information
3. Read some of the information
4. Just glanced at the information
5. Not read any of the information

Results from those who selected answers one to three were combined to give a percentage of those who had read at least some of the information. Codes four and five ('just glanced at the information' and 'not read any of the information') were excluded from this combination.

Segment One

At Mailing One, 64 per cent of Nil assessed clients had read at least some of the information with 22 per cent having read all of the information. This had increased significantly by Mailing Three, where 78 per cent said they had read at least some of the information and 35 per cent had read all of the information.

Figure 4.4 How much information has been read



Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet: Mailing-3 (630); Mailing-1 (616)

PWCs were significantly more likely to have read the letters at both mailings (Mailing One – 66 per cent, and Mailing Three – 82 per cent) compared to NRPs (Mailing One – 62 per cent and Mailing Three – 72 per cent).

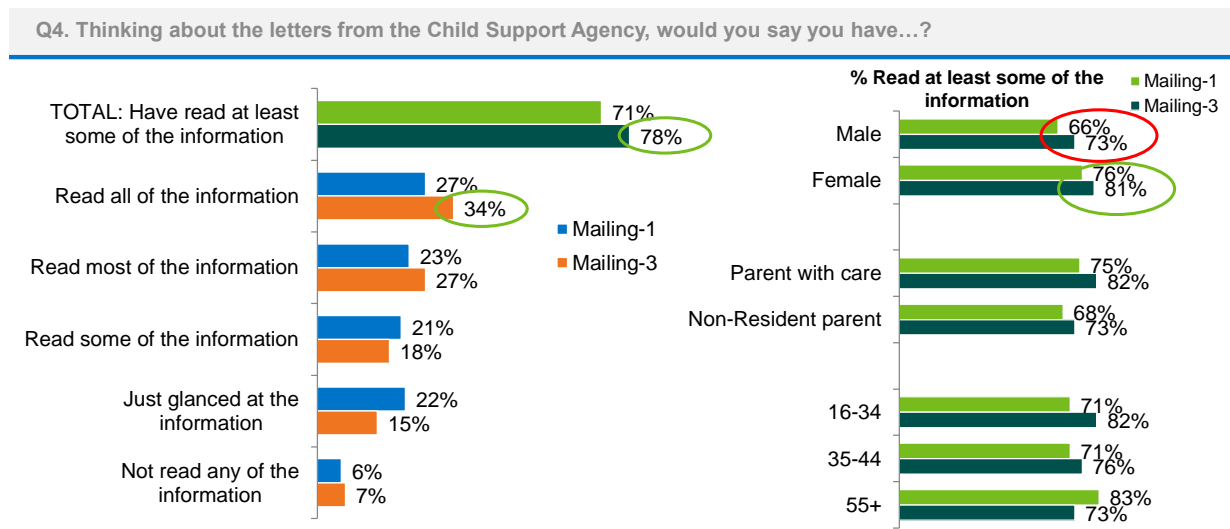
As Figure 4.4 demonstrates, older clients were significantly less likely to have read the Mailing Three letter compared to younger people.

Segment Two

Generally, as seen in Figure 4.5, Mailing Three respondents were more likely to have read all of the information than those at Mailing One.

As with Segment One, PWCs were more likely to have read at least some of the information compared to NRPs at both Mailing One and Mailing Three.

Figure 4.5 How much information has been read



Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet: Mailing – 3 (637); Mailing-1 (635)

4.3.2 Unprompted message recall from the mailings

Parents who had read the letters were asked to recall messages from them without being prompted. The following section outlines the messages that parents recalled themselves without any reminder of the content of the letters.

Parents were asked unprompted message recall at both the Mailing One and Mailing Three stages of the research.

Segment One

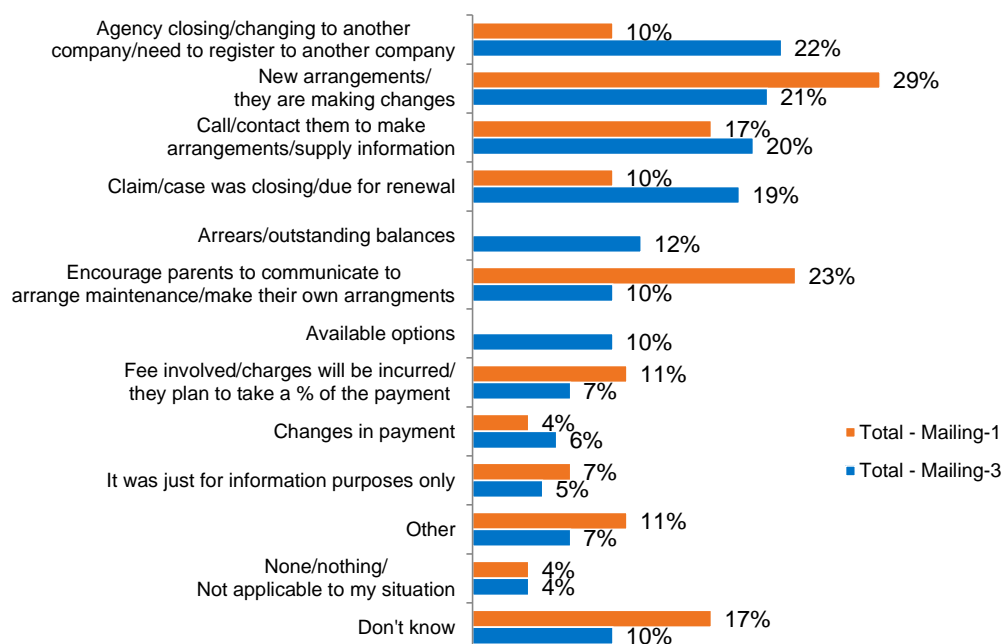
Messages that parents were most likely to recall at Mailing One, when unprompted, were that there will be new arrangements and the CSA are making changes (29 per cent) and that parents should communicate to arrange payments or make their own arrangements (23 per cent).

By Mailing Three the most recalled message was that the agency is closing and changing to another company that parents need to register with (22 per cent).

However, the message that parents were encouraged to communicate to make arrangements was one that was not so easily recalled by Mailing Three where only 10 per cent could remember this.

Figure 4.6 Recall of CSA letter and leaflet – informing what to do

Q6. I'd now like you to think about the letter and leaflet you received outlining changes to the Child Support Agency. Based on what you can remember, please can you tell me what the information was asking you to do?



Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information - Mailing-1 (557); Mailing-3 (600)

Table 4.2 demonstrates that for Nil assessed (Segment One) clients overall, recall of messages, when unprompted was not high. Furthermore, it shows NRPs were significantly more likely than PWCs to say that they did not know what the information was asking them to do at both Mailing One (22 per cent NRPs versus 14 per cent PWCs) and Mailing Three (15 per cent NRPs compared to six per cent PWCs).

Table 4.2 Do not know what the information was asking them to do

| Do not know what information was asking them to do | Mailing One Segment One | Mailing One Segment Two | Mailing Three Segment One | Mailing Three Segment Two |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Parent type: | | | | |
| PWC | 14% | 13% | 6% | 4% |
| NRP | 22% | 11% | 15% | 12% |

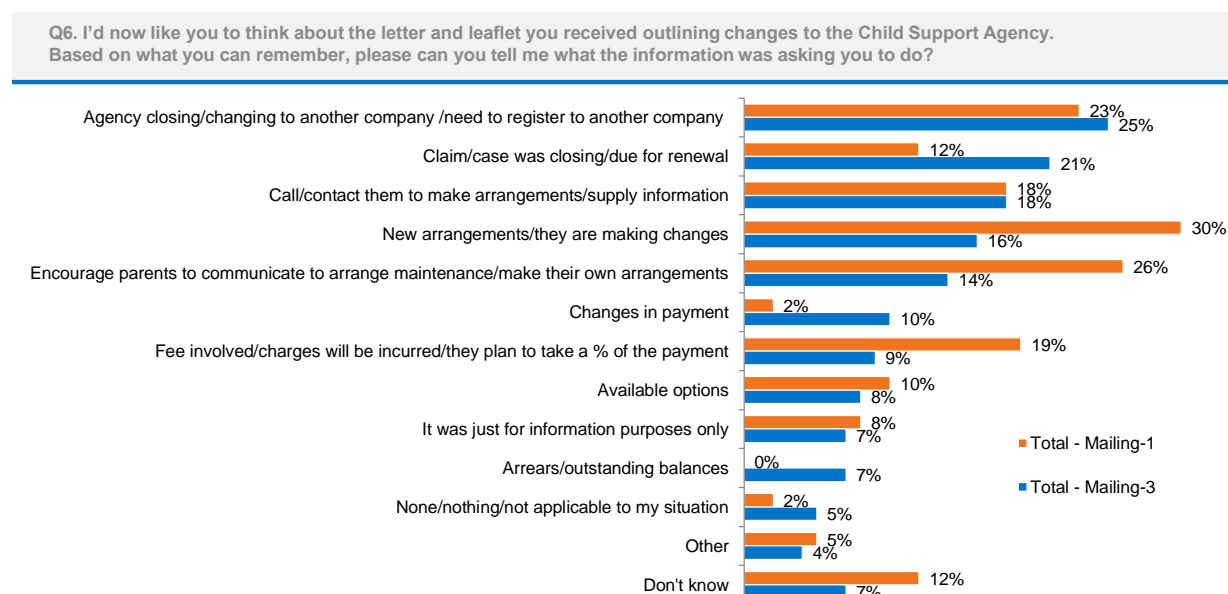
Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information - Mailing One (557); Mailing Three (600)

Segment Two

As with Segment One clients, the most recalled unprompted message at Mailing One was that there would be new arrangements and the CSA are making changes (30 per cent). However, unlike Nil assessed parents (Segment One), these Non compliant clients were also most likely to remember that parents are encouraged to

communicate to make their own arrangements (26 per cent). However, by Mailing Three this message to communicate was one of the least remembered (14 per cent).

Figure 4.7 Recall of CSA letter and leaflet – informing what to do



Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information - Mailing-1 (595); Mailing-3 (585)

PWCs are significantly more likely to recall messages regarding fees (23 per cent). The message resonates less well with NRPs (15 per cent).

Table 4.3.

Recall of CSA letter and leaflet – informing what to do

| Fee involved/charges will be incurred/they plan to take % of the payment | Mailing One Segment One | Mailing One Segment Two | Mailing Three Segment One | Mailing Three Segment Two |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Parent type: | | | | |
| PWC | 14% | 23% | 10% | 9% |
| NRP | 6% | 15% | 3% | 10% |

Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information - Mailing One (595); Mailing Three (585)

As Table 4.4 shows, PWCs were also significantly more likely to recall messaging regarding their case closing compared to NRPs.

Table 4.4

Recall of CSA letter and leaflet – Claim/case was closing/due for renewal

| Claim/case was closing/due for renewal | Mailing One Segment One | Mailing One Segment Two | Mailing Three Segment One | Mailing Three Segment Two |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Parent type: | | | | |
| PWC | 13% | 16% | 21% | 25% |
| NRP | 9% | 7% | 15% | 16% |

Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information - Mailing One (595); Mailing Three (585)

Prompted message recall from the mailings

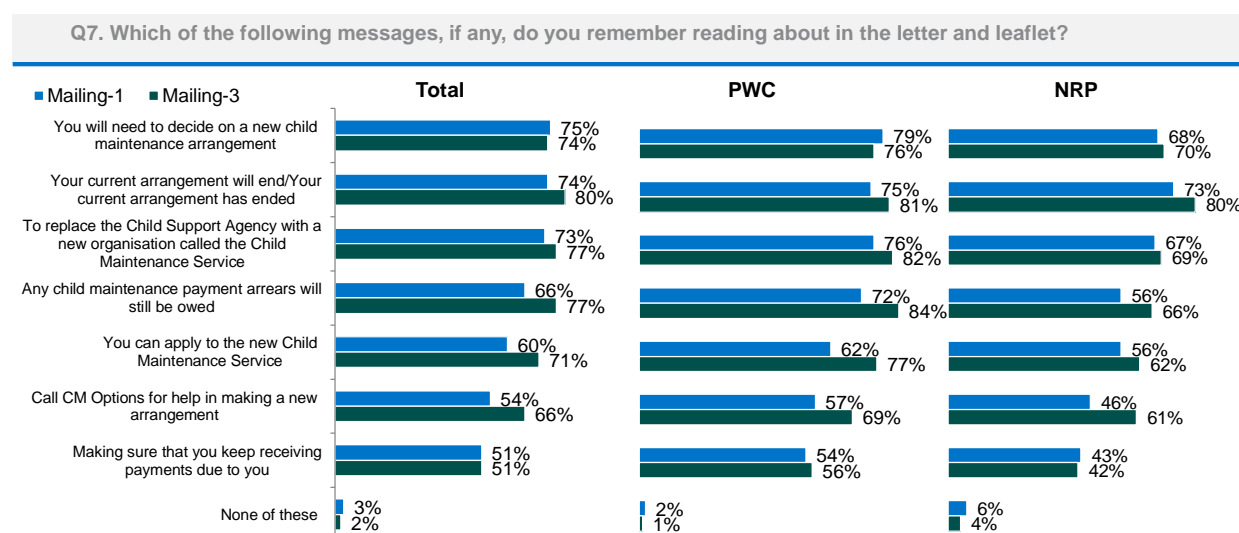
As well as being asked unprompted recall of messages within the mailings, respondents to Mailing One and Mailing Three surveys were also prompted with messages from the letters to measure recall.

Segment One

Mailings One and Three

Throughout the Mailing One and Mailing Three surveys with Nil assessed (Segment One) clients, the majority could recall at least one message from the mailings when prompted.

Figure 4.8 Prompted awareness Segment One



Base: Mailing-1: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information (Total: 557; PWC: 331; NRP: 226)

Mailing-3: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information (Total: 557; PWC: 331; NRP: 226)

Mailing One - the most recalled message when prompted was 'you will need to make a new child maintenance arrangement' recalled by 75 per cent of Nil assessed parents. A similar proportion also recalled the messages 'your current arrangement will end' (74 per cent) and 'to replace the Child Support Agency with another organisation called the Child Maintenance Service (73 per cent).

By Mailing Three, there were slightly higher levels of recall for the majority of messages than at Mailing One. For example, 80 per cent of parents recalled the message 'your current arrangement has ended'. Also at Mailing Three, messages that direct parents about *how* to make new arrangements such as applying to the CMS or contacting CM Options tend to be more likely to be remembered than at Mailing One. However, recall of these messages is still less than knowing that changes will actually occur.

At both Mailing One and Mailing Three, PWCs are more likely to have greater recall of all messages than NRPs.

Segment Two

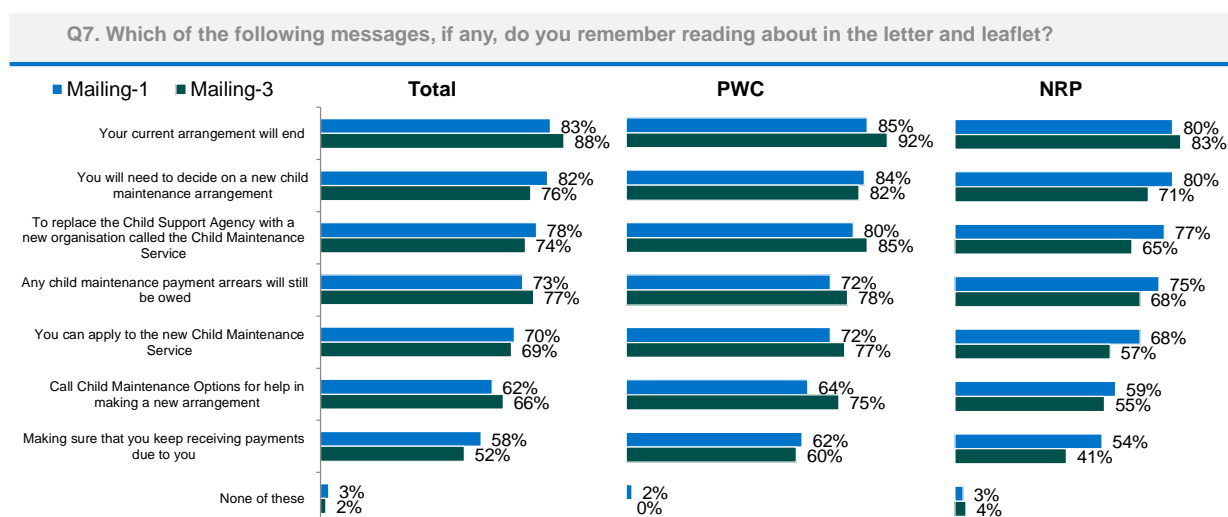
Mailings One and Two

In line with results among Segment One clients, most Non-compliant (Segment Two) parents recalled at least one message from the Mailing One and Mailing Three letters when prompted.

The most recalled message, when prompted, at both mailings was 'your current arrangement will end' (Mailing One - 83 per cent and Mailing Three - 88 per cent).

As with Segment One, messages that direct parents to making new arrangements through the CMS or via CM Options were less well recalled overall, but recall increased by Mailing Three. Again, as with Segment One PWCs tended to be more aware of messages compared to NRPs.

Recall of messaging is highest amongst those who understand what the letters mean. Figure 4.9 outlines the levels of recall for each message by level of understanding. In general NRP percentages are below those of PWCs inferring that NRPs are less likely to recall messages when compared to PWCs.

Figure 4.9 Prompted awareness Segment Two

Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information Mailing-1: (Total: 594; PWC: 341; NRP: 253); Mailing-3 (Total: 594; PWC: 341; NRP: 253)

4.3.4 Alternative sources of information about case closure

Those who had received the letter were also asked about alternative sources of information that they had seen regarding case closure. This is to gauge the effect and awareness of indirect communications amongst those who had received the letter as well as finding out what other sources parents were using for information regarding case closure.

Segment One

Segment One parents tended to have seen information about case closures in the letter e.g. 31 per cent at Mailing Three, or could not remember seeing any other information (39 per cent at Mailing One and 29 per cent at Mailing Three).

Some parents had found information about case closure from other sources. Internet sources were most cited: 13 per cent of Mailing One parents had seen something about case closures on an internet source, with 10 per cent of Mailing Three parents also using these sources.

Television was also cited highly, 12 per cent of Mailing One parents had found information this way as well as nine per cent of Mailing Three parents.

Other sources which were mentioned include family or friends, CSA caseworkers, national newspapers, Jobcentres and the radio.

Segment Two

Around a third of clients in Segment Two at both mailings stated that they had only seen information regarding case closures in the letters (29% at Mailing One; 33% at Mailing Three).

Again, internet sources were most used for those who did see information elsewhere, these included:

- Websites which are searched for online
 - www.gov.uk
 - Other specific websites
- However, as with Segment One a high proportion could not remember or did not know if they had seen information elsewhere (25% Mailing One and 27 per cent Mailing Three).

5 Knowledge of Arrangements

CSA clients were asked at each stage of the research about their knowledge of different types of child maintenance arrangements available to them and their ex-partner. Parents were asked if they knew:

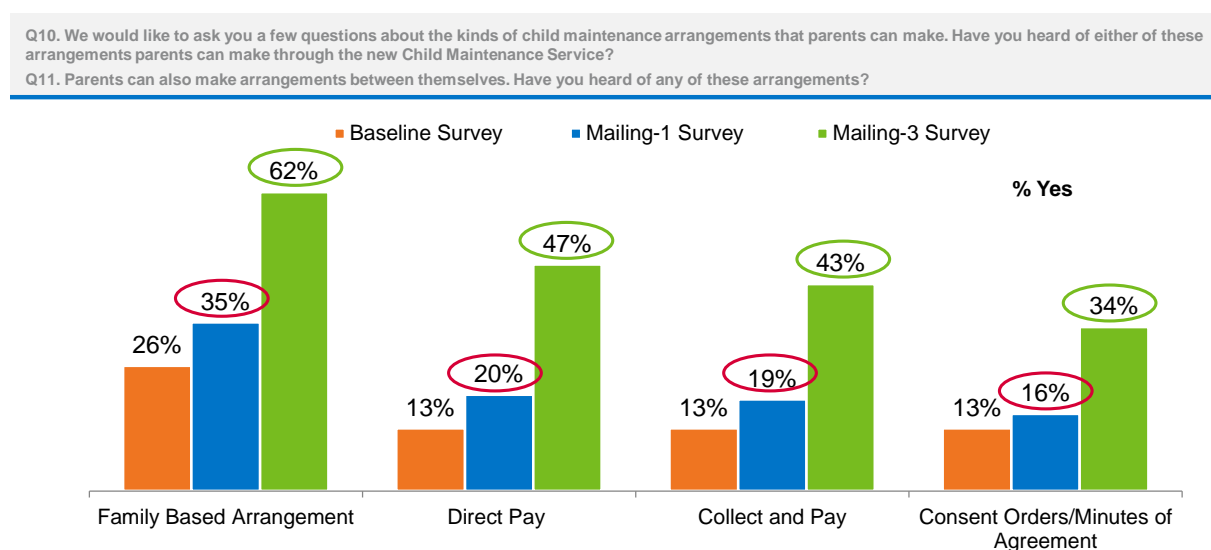
- What arrangements were available;
- How to set them up; and,
- At later mailing stages, whether they had one of these arrangements in place.

5.1 Knowledge of arrangements

Regardless of whether clients were Nil assessed (Segment One) or Non compliant (Segment Two), knowledge of arrangements increased significantly throughout mailings. This shows that while some parents may be still unclear on what case closure means, direct mailings are having a significant impact on awareness of the services and arrangements that are available to parents.

Even so, as Figure 5.1 shows, by Mailing Three there were still high proportions of clients who were not aware of the various types of child maintenance arrangements. It can be seen, however, that higher proportions are aware of FBAs compared to the statutory arrangements of Direct Pay and Collect and Pay.

Figure 5.1 Segment One: Awareness of Arrangement Types



Base: Baseline Survey: All Baseline Segment-1 respondents (800)

Base: Mailing-1 Survey: All Mailing-1 Segment-1 respondents who have received the letter and leaflet (616)

Base: All Mailing-3 Segment-1 respondents (800)

Arrangements were generally better recognised by PWCs throughout the surveys compared to NRPs. The table below indicates increased awareness of the differing types of child maintenance arrangement among these parents.

Table 5.1 Segment One: Baseline Survey - PWC and NRP Awareness of Arrangement Types

| Arrangement | Total Base-line | Total Mailing One | Total Mailing Three | PWC Base-line | PWC Mailing One | PWC Mailing Three | NRP Base-line | NRP Mailing One | NRP Mailing Three |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Family-based | 26% | 35% | 62% | 26% | 35% | 64% | 28% | 34% | 60% |
| Direct Pay | 13% | 20% | 47% | 14% | 24% | 54% | 11% | 16% | 40% |
| Collect and Pay | 13% | 19% | 43% | 15% | 24% | 55% | 10% | 13% | 30% |
| Consent Orders/ Minutes of Agreement | 13% | 16% | 34% | 14% | 17% | 38% | 12% | 14% | 30% |

Base: Baseline Survey: All Baseline Segment-1 respondents (800)

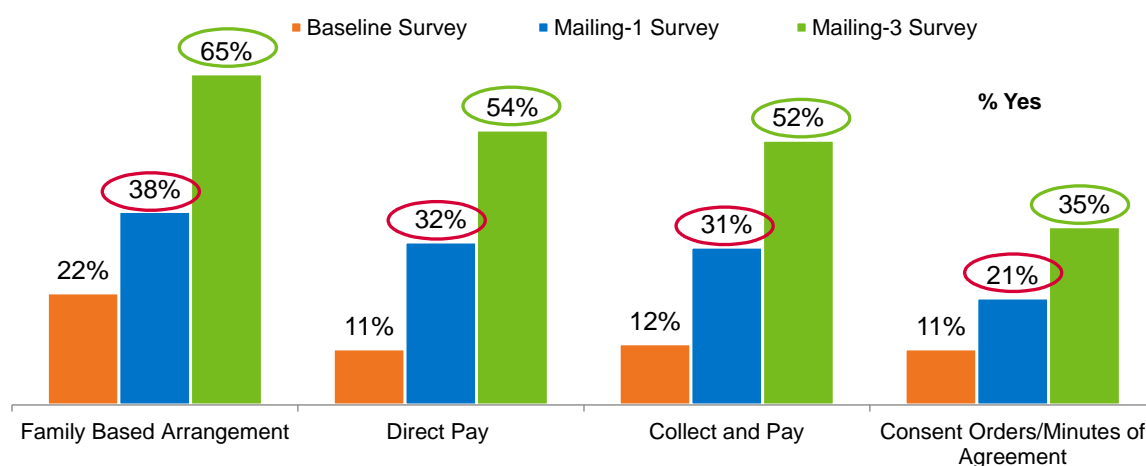
Base: Mailing One Survey: All Mailing One Segment-1 respondents who have received the letter and leaflet (616)

Base: All Mailing Three Segment-1 respondents (800)

There were similar findings among Segment Two parents, with increased awareness throughout mailings as well as most being aware of Family-based arrangements see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2 Segment Two: Awareness of Arrangement Types

Q10. We would like to ask you a few questions about the kinds of child maintenance arrangements that parents can make. Have you heard of either of these arrangements parents can make through the new Child Maintenance Service?
Q11. Parents can also make arrangements between themselves. Have you heard of any of these arrangements?



Base: Baseline Survey: All Baseline Segment-2 respondents (800)

Base: Mailing-1 Survey: All Mailing-1 Segment-2 respondents (808)

Base: All Mailing-3 Segment-2 respondents (800)

As highlighted in results among Segment One parents, PWCs were also more likely to be aware of arrangements than NRPs in Segment Two.

Table 5.2 Segment Two: Baseline Survey - PWC and NRP Awareness of Arrangements Types

| Arrangement | Total Base-line | Total Mailing One | Total Mailing Three | PWC Base-line | PWC Mailing One | PWC Mailing Three | NRP Base-line | NRP Mailing One | NRP Mailing Three |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Family-based | 22% | 38% | 65% | 21% | 71% | 68% | 23% | 59% | 62% |
| Direct Pay | 11% | 32% | 54% | 11% | 39% | 66% | 12% | 24% | 43% |
| Collect and Pay | 12% | 31% | 52% | 14% | 40% | 63% | 9% | 22% | 41% |
| Consent Orders/ Minutes of Agreement | 11% | 21% | 35% | 10% | 22% | 42% | 12% | 20% | 27% |

Base: Baseline Survey: All Baseline Segment-2 respondents (800)

Base: Mailing One Survey: All Mailing One Segment-2 respondents (808)

Base: All Mailing Three Segment-2 respondents (800)

5.2 Awareness of how to set up arrangements

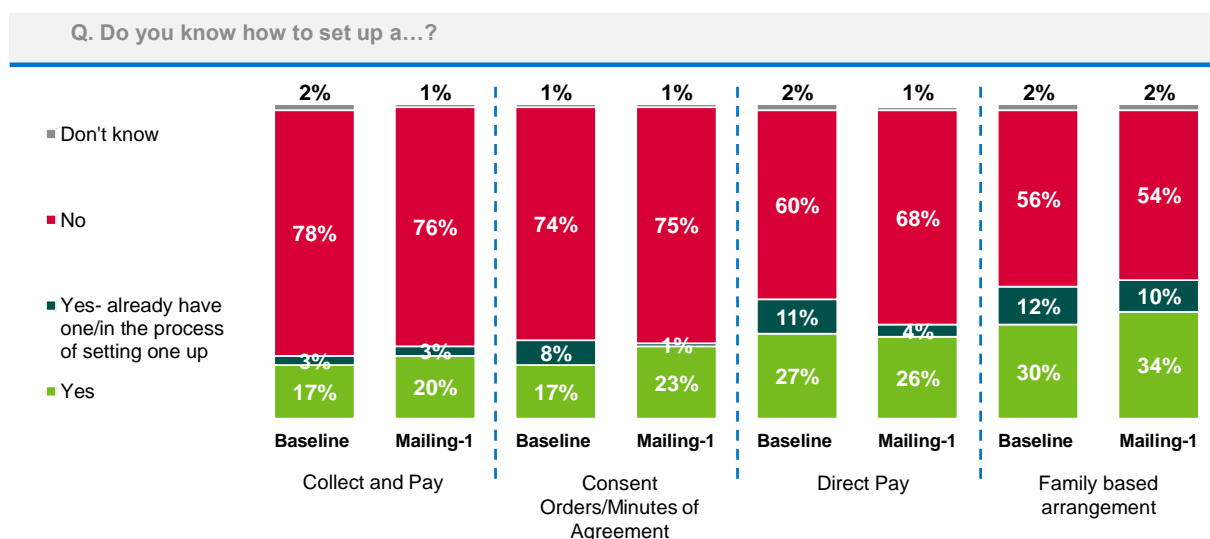
During both the Baseline and Mailing One surveys, parents who were aware of each arrangement were asked if they knew how to set up the new Child Maintenance arrangements and whether they already had one set up. The following section outlines the findings from these questions.

5.3 Segment One

The majority of Segment One clients did not know how to set up arrangements when asked at the Baseline and Mailing One surveys (clients were not asked this question at Mailing Three).

Whilst around a third of Segment One clients knew how to set up a FBA at the Baseline and Mailing One stages (see Figure 4.3 below), over half did not (Baseline 56 per cent; Mailing One 54 per cent). For all arrangement types one in three or less knew how to set-up one of the four arrangement types.

Overall, parents were least likely to know how to set up Collect and Pay arrangements (78 per cent did not know how to set up a Collect and Pay arrangement at the Baseline and 76 per cent still did not know at Mailing One).

Figure 5.3 Segment One: Knowledge of how to set-up arrangements

Base: All who are aware of at least one arrangement: Direct Pay: Baseline: (257); Mailing-1 (370); Collect and Pay: Baseline (243); Mailing-1 (327); A Family-based Arrangement: Baseline (420); Mailing-1 (501); Consent Orders/Minutes of agreement: Baseline (257); Mailing-1 (329)

There are significant differences between different parent types and their knowledge of how to set up arrangements. While more PWCs at both Baseline and Mailing One surveys knew how to set up Family-based arrangements, they were less likely to know how to set up Direct Pay arrangements compared to NRPs.

Table 5.3 Segment One Knowledge of how to set up arrangements- NRPs and PWCs

| Know how to set up an arrangement | Total Baseline | Total Mailing One | PWC Baseline | PWC Mailing One | NRP Baseline | NRP Mailing One |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Family-based | 30% | 34% | 33% | 39% | 26% | 27% |
| Direct Pay | 27% | 26% | 25% | 25% | 32% | 29% |
| Collect and Pay | 17% | 20% | 19% | 19% | 11% | 20% |
| Consent Orders/ Minutes of Agreement | 17% | 23% | 16% | 24% | 18% | 23% |

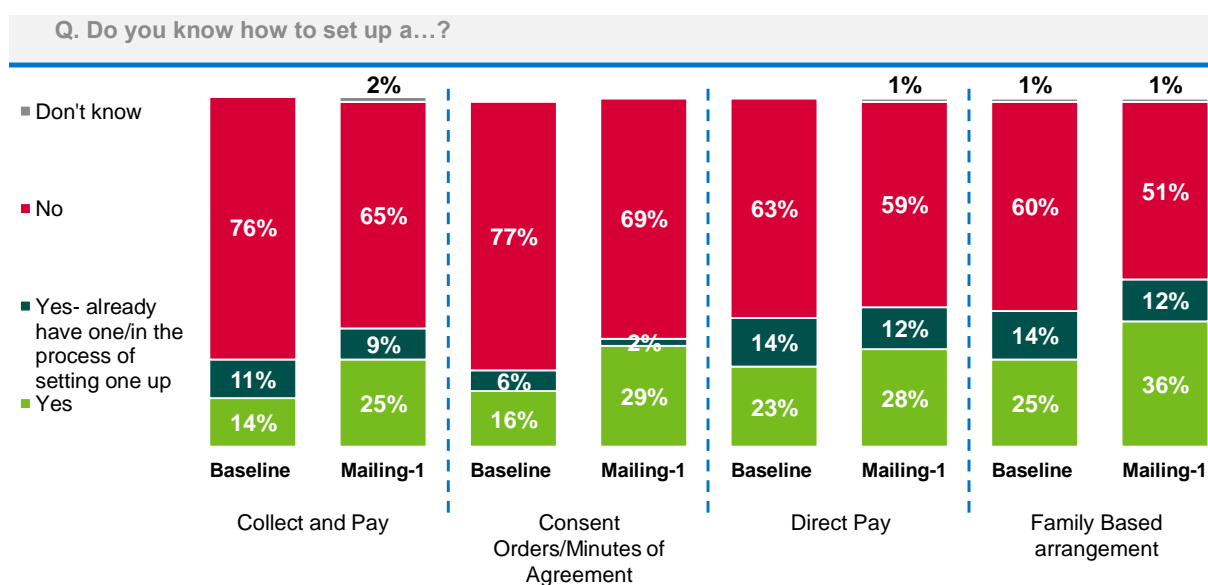
Base: All who are aware of at least one arrangement: Direct Pay: Baseline: (257); Mailing One (370); Collect and Pay: Baseline (243); Mailing One (327); A Family-based Arrangement: Baseline (420); Mailing One (501); Consent Orders/Minutes of agreement: Baseline (257); Mailing One (329)

5.3.1 Segment Two

Segment Two clients were more likely to know how to set up a new arrangement than Segment One parents and this knowledge increased across the mailings. However, the majority did not know how to set up any kind of arrangement.

At the Baseline stage, 60 per cent of parents did not know how to set up a FBA, though this decreased by the Mailing One survey to 51 per cent. In common with Segment One, the second highest levels of awareness of arrangements are observed for Direct Pay.

Figure 5.4 Segment Two: Knowledge of how to set up arrangements



Base: All who are aware of at least one arrangement: Direct Pay: Baseline: (242); Mailing-1 (448); Collect and Pay: Baseline (247); Mailing-1 (420); A Family-based Arrangement: Baseline (379); Mailing-1 (522); Consent Orders/Minutes of agreement: Baseline (239); Mailing-1 (323)

Again, there are significant differences between parent types in terms of knowledge setting up arrangements. However, whereas Segment One PWCs and NRPs have broadly similar levels of knowledge at both stages, Segment Two NRPs display generally higher levels of knowledge at the Baseline Stage. The pattern is then reversed at Mailing One with greater levels of knowledge among PWCs.

Table 5.4 Segment Two: Knowledge of how to set up arrangements - NRPs and PWCs

| Know how to set up an arrangement | Total Baseline | Total Mailing One | PWC Baseline | PWC Mailing One | NRP Baseline | NRP Mailing One |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Family-based | 25% | 36% | 25% | 39% | 25% | 33% |
| Direct Pay | 23% | 28% | 19% | 30% | 28% | 26% |
| Collect and Pay | 14% | 25% | 11% | 26% | 18% | 22% |
| Consent Orders/ Minutes of Agreement | 16% | 29% | 14% | 32% | 18% | 26% |

Base: All who are aware of at least one arrangement: Direct Pay: Baseline: (242); Mailing One (448); Collect and Pay: Baseline (247); Mailing One (420); A Family-based Arrangement: Baseline (379); Mailing One (522); Consent Orders/Minutes of agreement: Baseline (239); Mailing One (323)

5.4 Sources of information about arrangements

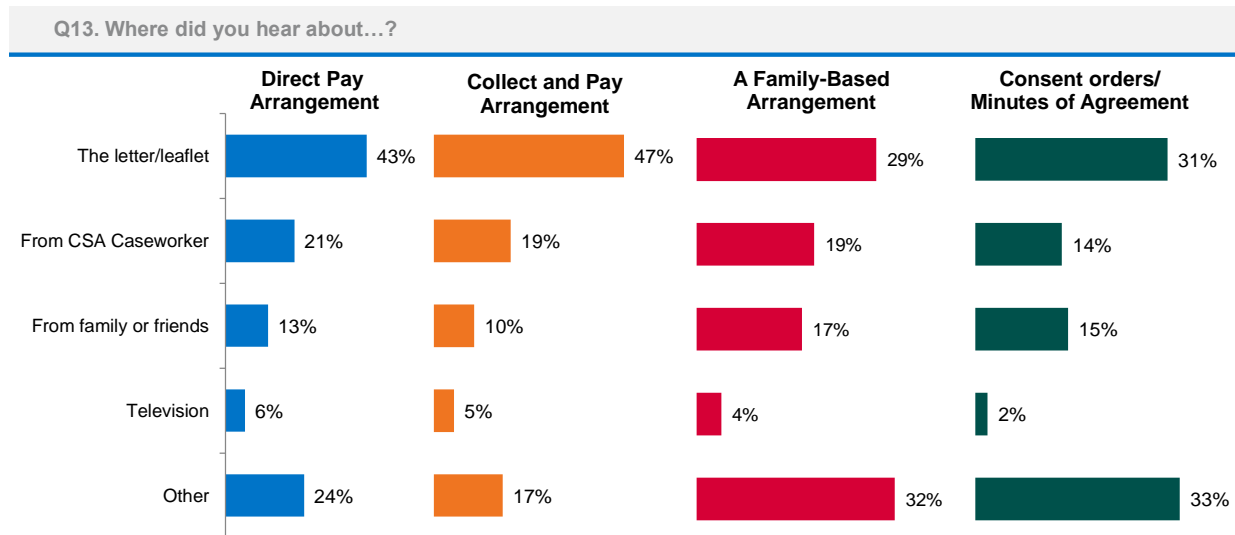
Parents who were aware of each arrangement were asked where they had heard or learnt about the arrangement from.

These questions were unprompted and asked at both Mailing One and Mailing Three research stages.

5.4.1 Segment One

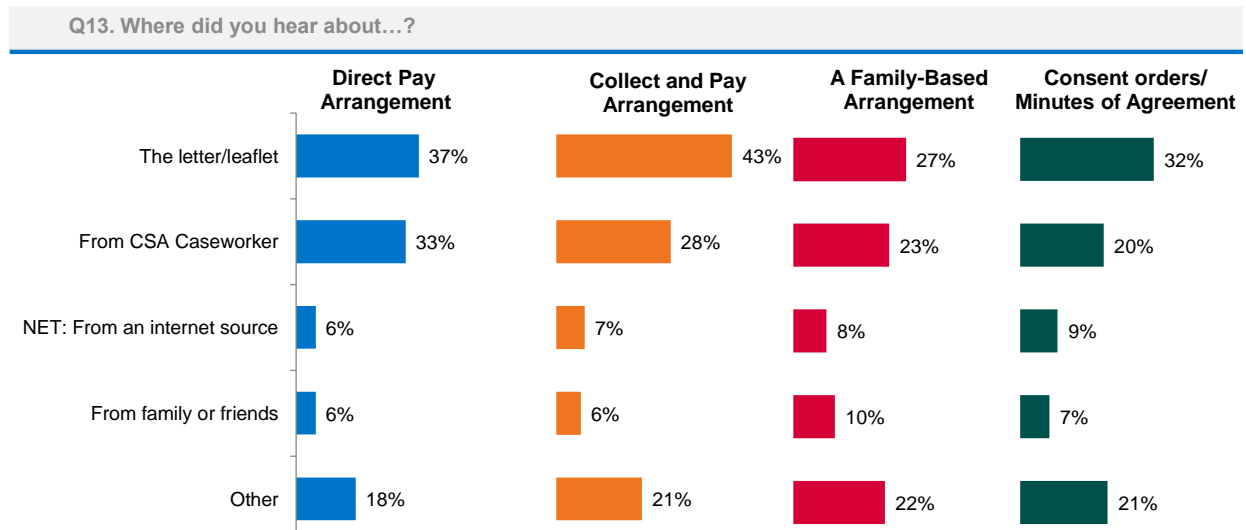
Among Segment One parents at both Mailing One and Mailing Three the most mentioned source of information for all arrangements was the Mailing One letter (see Figures 5.5. and 5.6.) CSA Caseworkers were the second most cited source of information which increased by Mailing Three.

Figure 5.5 Segment One: Mailing One Sources of knowledge about arrangements



Base: All Mailing-1 Segment-1 respondents who are aware of each arrangement: Direct Pay Arrangement (370); Collect and Pay Arrangement (327); A Family Based arrangement (501); Consent Orders/Minutes of Agreement (329)

Figure 5.6 Segment One: Mailing Three Sources of knowledge about arrangements



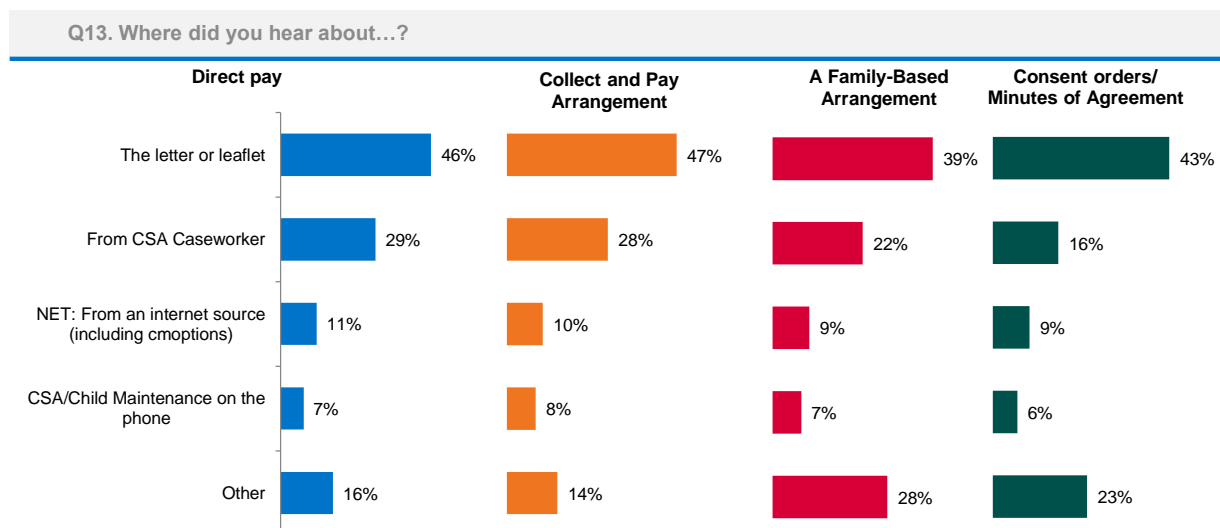
Base: All Mailing-3 Segment-1 respondents who are aware of each arrangement: Direct Pay Arrangement (366); Collect and Pay Arrangement (337); A Family Based arrangement (488); Consent Orders/Minutes of Agreement (268)

5.4.2 Segment Two

As with Segment One, at Mailing One most Segment Two clients mentioned the letter and leaflet as their main source of information on arrangements. Almost half found out about Collect and Pay (47 per cent) and Direct Pay (46 per cent) from the letter and leaflet.

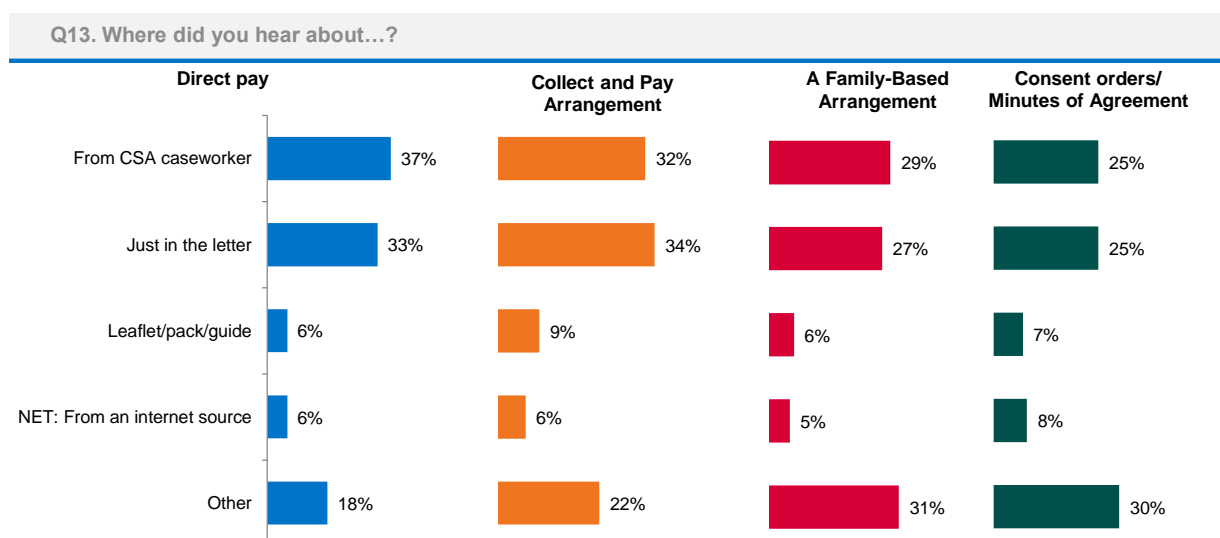
CSA Caseworkers were widely used and it can be seen that they were more likely to be mentioned as a source of information by Mailing Three, particularly for information about the statutory schemes – Direct Pay and Collect and Pay.

Figure 5.7 Segment Two: Mailing One Sources of knowledge about arrangements



Base: All Mailing-1 Segment-2 respondents who are aware of each arrangement: Direct Pay Arrangement (448); Collect and Pay Arrangement (522); A Family Based arrangement (516); Consent Orders/Minutes of Agreement (323)

Figure 5.8 Segment Two: Mailing Three Sources of knowledge about arrangements



Base: All Mailing-3 Segment-2 respondents who are aware of each arrangement: Direct Pay Arrangement (435); Collect and Pay Arrangement (414); A Family Based arrangement (516); Consent Orders/Minutes of Agreement (274)

6 Action Taken

The proportion of parents who had taken action as a result of case closure, as well as those who intended to take action, was monitored throughout this research.

Clients were asked whether they had taken any action or intended to take action as well as what form this action took.

The term 'action taken' refers to anything from the following list:

- Calling the Child Support Agency
- Calling CM Options
- Making a new application for child maintenance
- Making a Family-based arrangement with an ex-partner
- Making a Direct Pay arrangement with the Child Maintenance service
- Making a Collect and Pay arrangement with the Child Maintenance Service
- Filling in a form or providing necessary documentation
- Starting the process of implementing a new application for child maintenance
- Going online to cmoptions.org
- Starting the process in forming a Family-based arrangement
- Speaking to a friend or family member
- Keeping up payments or sending off payment
- Getting in touch with the agency.

While not all of the actions listed above explicitly relate to beginning a new child maintenance arrangement, they do outline the extent of action that has been taken.

6.1 Action Taken or Intended

Parents were asked at all stages of the research whether they had taken action or intended to take action as a result of hearing about case closures, whether through the letters or not.

6.1.1 Segment One Action Taken

Throughout the Segment One research, the majority of clients had not taken any action to change their child maintenance arrangement. Whether they said they will do so fluctuates throughout the research and appears to show some indecision. Those who had received the letter/leaflet were more likely to say that had taken/or

intended to take action, however, compared to those who had not received the letters. This appears to indicate that the mailings did spur a move to action.

As Table 6.1 illustrates, by Mailing Three only 38 per cent of Segment One parents (both those who had received and said they did not receive the letter) had taken action or intended to take action. This is lower than at the baseline where all parents were asked if they had taken or intended to take action to change their child maintenance arrangements.

Looking at those who did receive the letters/leaflets – by Mailing Three a half (50 per cent) said they had done something or *intended* to do so, which is an increase on earlier stages of the research.

It is important to note when reviewing these findings that actions are merely claimed and therefore may not necessarily reflect the true proportion of those who have actively made a change to their child maintenance arrangements.

Table 6.1 Segment One: Action taken/intended to be taken Mailing One and Mailing Three

| Q8. What, if anything, have you done as a result of receiving this letter and leaflet? Q9. Do you intend to take any action as a result of receiving this letter and leaflet? What action do you intend to take? | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | Baseline: All respondents (800) | Mailing-1: All CSA Segment-1 clients who received the letter/ leaflet and read at least some of it (n = 557) | Mailing-1: All Segment-1 CSA clients (including those who did not receive the letter/leaflet) (n = 805) | Mailing-3: All CSA Segment-1 clients who received the letter/ leaflet and read at least some of it (n = 600) | Mailing-3: All Segment-1 CSA Clients (including those who did not receive the letter/leaflet) (n = 800) |
| % NET: all who have taken and intend to take action | 44% | 45% | 31% | 50% | 38% |
| % who have already taken action | 24% | 24% | 16% | 40% | 30% |
| % who intend to take action | 19% | 21% | 15% | 10% | 8% |
| % who have not taken action and do not intend to do so or who have not received a letter/leaflet | 57% | 55% | 69% | 50% | 62% |
| TOTAL BASE | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Throughout all of the mailings, those who took some form of action made a range of steps towards changing their child maintenance arrangements. The most likely action was ‘calling the Child Support Agency’ (17 per cent at Mailing Three; 12 per cent at Mailing One). Nearly same proportion of respondents called CM Options at Mailing Three (14 per cent), however a lower proportion did this at Mailing One (4 per cent).

6.1.2 Segment Two Action Taken

In common with Nil assessed (Segment One) clients, the majority of Non compliant clients (Segment Two) had not taken and did not intend to take action to amend their child maintenance arrangements at the time of the research. Neither nil assessed nor non-compliant clients have maintenance flowing and this may influence their attitudes and actions towards child maintenance so that they are less engaged.

Those who had read some of the Mailing One and Mailing Three letters were more likely to have taken action or intended to, than Segment One clients. Of those who had received and read at least some of the letter at Mailing Three, 61 per cent had taken action or intended to take action. This includes almost a half (48%) who had already taken action.

Table 6.2 Segment Two: Actions taken/intended to be taken

| Q8. What, if anything, have you done as a result of receiving this letter and leaflet? Q9. Do you intend to take any action as a result of receiving this letter and leaflet? What action do you intend to take? | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| | Baseline: All Segment-2 CSA Clients (n = 800) | Mailing-1: All CSA Segment-2 clients who received the letter/ leaflet and read at least some of it (n = 595) | Mailing-1: All Segment-2 CSA clients (including those who did not receive the letter/leaflet) (n = 808) | Mailing-3: All CSA Segment-2 clients who received the letter/ leaflet and read at least some of it (n = 594) | Mailing-3 : All Segment-2 CSA Clients (including those who did not receive the letter/leaflet) (n = 800) |
| NET: % who have taken and intend to take action | 34% | 66% | 48% | 61% | 44% |
| % who have already taken action | 27% | 33% | 24% | 48% | 35% |
| % who intend to take action | 7% | 33% | 24% | 13% | 9% |
| % who have not taken action and do not intend to do so or who have not received a letter/leaflet | 66% | 34% | 52% | 39% | 56% |
| TOTAL BASE | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Mirroring results in Segment One, a range of actions were taken by parents at both stages of the Mailings in Segment Two. The most likely action was 'calling the Child Support Agency' (16% at Mailing Three; 14% at Mailing One). The same proportion of respondents called CM Options at Mailing Three (16%), however a slightly lower proportion did this at Mailing One (10%).

7 Conclusions

- While mailings had an impact on awareness of CSA closures, indirect communications also drove up awareness of case closures.
- Disentangling the relative success of these different communications is therefore difficult but knowledge of arrangements did increase after each mail out. This suggests that while some parents may have been unclear about what case closure means, direct mailings had a generally positive effect in terms of highlighting changes taking place to the CSA and their case arrangement.
- Encouragingly, many of the campaign messages appear to have resonated with clients. Those who have read the letter display higher levels of message recall as well as knowledge of child care arrangements and understanding of the changes taking place.
- That said, most clients after their Mailing Three letter did not know how to set up an arrangement. Moreover, a majority of clients either had not or did not intend to take action as a consequence of the case closure letters.
- Throughout the research, PWCs showed higher levels of awareness and engagement with all aspects of case closures. Significantly more PWCs were aware of arrangements as well as case closures.
- Even among those NRPs who had received and read the letters, there was still a lower level of knowledge and engagement than seen in similar PWC groups.
- Message recall was not high at an unprompted stage: this suggests that while parents can recall messages when prompted, there may not be a natural understanding or awareness of what changes mean.
- Mailings, when read and received, have increased awareness in changes for both Segment One and Segment Two. This suggests that the same effect may be seen for Segments Three, and Four, which are generally more engaged parent types.
- Similarly, the amount of action taken by parents has increased for both Segment One and Segment Two after each mailing. As these groups are generally disengaged, it would suggest that mailings will have the same, or a greater impact, on encouraging engaged segments to take action.

7.1 Recommendations for future communications

- DWP need to find ways of communicating and engaging NRPs. While this may be a product of the segments studied in this report, the consistently lower levels of engagement and awareness of this group does suggest that there may be a wider spread issue among NRP groups.
- Make sure that arrangements are communicated accurately with full explanations of how new arrangements can be made and whether they need to be made.
- Further communicate the benefits of Family-based arrangements over formal arrangements for those who do not need a formal arrangement anymore.
- Find ways of communicating messages which embed them into parents' knowledge to increase unprompted awareness. Lack of unprompted awareness suggests that there is a lack of understanding of some aspects of case closures. Communicating messages in a way which connects with parents further will increase unprompted awareness and overall understanding.

8 Appendix A: Further survey information on Prompted message recall from the mailings

Table 8.1 Segment 2: Message recall by understanding of changes

| Message | Total | Understand completely (Base: 154) | Understand some or most of what is needed (Base: 362) | Do not understand at all (Base: 74) |
|--|-------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Your current arrangement will end | 83% | 97% | 83% | 62% |
| You will need to decide on a new child maintenance arrangement | 82% | 95% | 81% | 64% |
| To replace the Child Support Agency with a new organisation called the Child Maintenance Service | 78% | 92% | 80% | 47% |
| Any child maintenance payment arrears will still be owed | 73% | 88% | 72% | 51% |
| You can apply to the new Child Maintenance Service | 70% | 88% | 71% | 30% |
| Call Child Maintenance Options for help in making a new arrangement | 62% | 83% | 59% | 31% |
| Making sure that you keep receiving payments due to you | 58% | 75% | 57% | 32% |
| None of these | 3% | - | 1% | 16% |

Mailing Three

Again, following recall patterns observed at Mailing One among Segment Two clients, the three most recalled messages at Segment Two Mailing Three were:

1. 'Your current arrangement will end' (88 per cent); higher amongst PWC audiences than NRP counterparts (92 per cent versus 83 per cent).

2. 'Any child maintenance arrears will still be owed', 77 per cent; higher recall among PWCs compared to NRPs; this is not statistically significant, 82 per cent versus 71 per cent.
3. 'You need to decide on a new child maintenance arrangement', 76 per cent. Over eight in ten PWCs recall this message (85 per cent) compared to less than 65 per cent of NRPs.

Overall, just two per cent of those who had read at least some of Mailing Three were not aware of any of the messages, made up entirely of NRPs (four per cent of NRPs). This suggests that while the vast majority of NRPs are able to recall at least one message from Mailing Three, there is a knowledge gap or lack of awareness amongst this group.

Recall of the Mailing Three campaign is higher for some messages amongst those who had made a change to their child maintenance arrangement.

Table 8.2 Message recall by action taken

| Message | Total | Have done something as a result of receiving the letter(s) | Have not done anything |
|--|--------------|---|-------------------------------|
| You need to decide on a new child maintenance arrangement | 76% | 84% | 71% |
| To replace the CSA with a new agency called the Child Maintenance Service | 74% | 85% | 65% |
| You can apply to the new Child Maintenance Service | 69% | 80% | 59% |
| Call Child Maintenance Options for help making a new arrangement | 66% | 80% | 55% |
| Making sure you keep receiving payments that are due to you | 52% | 58% | 48% |

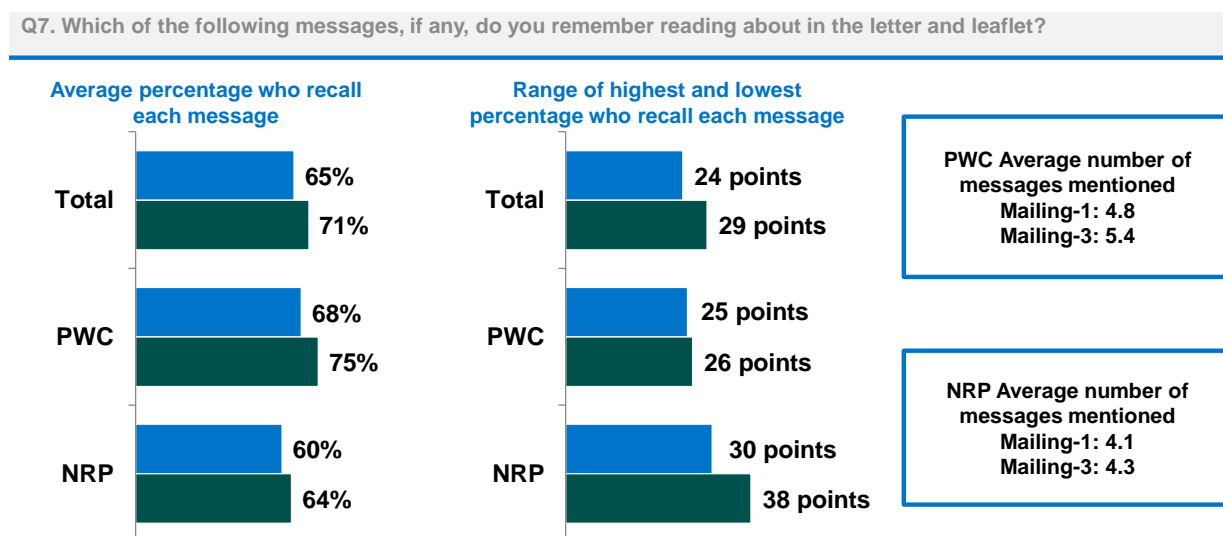
Message recall summary

Sixty-five per cent of Segment One parents recalled each message from the Mailing One survey when prompted. This is significantly higher for PWCs compared to NRPs (68 per cent versus 60 per cent). PWC parents also recall more messages on average (4.8) compared to NRPs (4.1).

At Mailing Three, 71 percent of Segment One parents recalled each message when prompted. PWCs recalled significantly more messages than NRPs (5.4 compared to

4.3). PWCs on average were also more likely to recall each message than NRPs, 75 per cent versus 64 per cent.

Figure 8.1 Segment One average recall levels

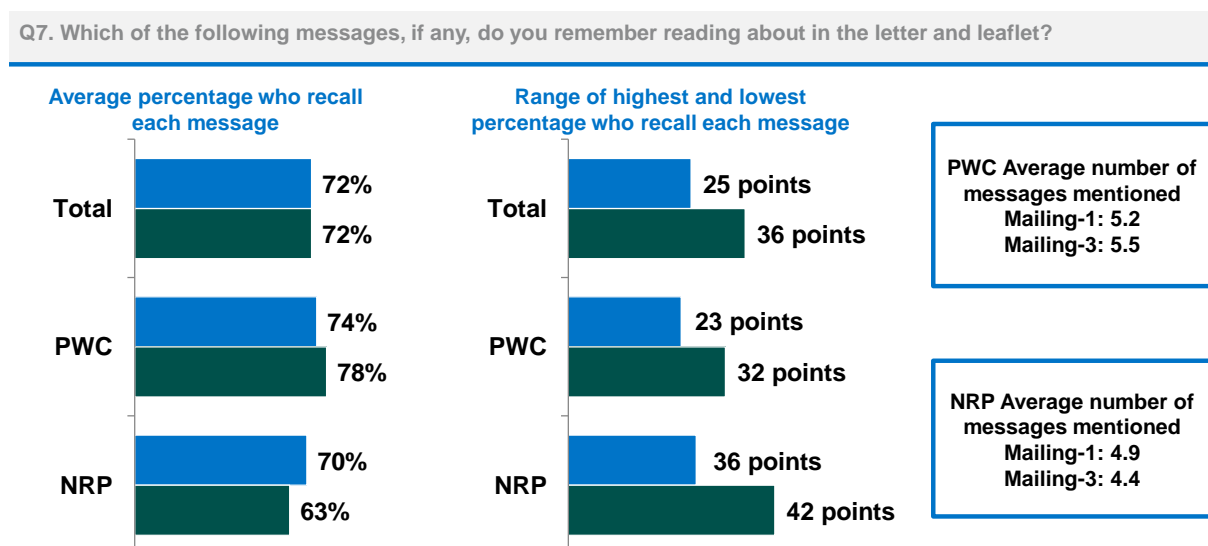


Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information : Mailing-1 (Total: 557; PWC: 331; NRP: 226); Mailing-3 (Total: 600; PWC: 357; NRP: 243)

Among Segment-Two parents 72 per cent recalled each message. Seventy-four per cent of PWCs recalled each message compared to 70 per cent of NRPs.

A similar proportion of Segment Two clients recalled each message from Mailing Three. Seventy-two per cent of all parents recalled each message. Seventy-eight per cent of PWCs recalled each message, while just 63 per cent of NRPs recalled each message. PWCs also recalled more messages on average than NRPs (5.5 compared to 4.4).

Figure 8.2 Segment-2 average message recall levels



Base: All who have received the letter and leaflet and read at least some of the information: Mailing-1 (Total: 595; PWC: 324; NRP: 271); Mailing-3 (Total: 594; PWC: 341; NRP: 253)

9 Appendix B: Survey sampling, fieldwork outcomes and weighting

9.1 Survey sampling, opt-outs and response rates for surveys

Table 9.1 Interviews and Conversion rates for each survey

| | Grand Total – Loaded sample ⁴ | Dialled - No response | Dead sample | Refusal | Completed | Unadjusted response rate% | Adjusted response rate % | Dead Sample % |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Segment One Baseline | | | | | | | | |
| NRPs | 8,000 | 5,650 | 1,675 | 275 | 400 | 5.0 | 59.3 | 20.9 |
| PWCs | 7,968 | 6,634 | 788 | 146 | 400 | 5.0 | 73.3 | 9.9 |
| Total | 15,968 | 12,284 | 2,463 | 421 | 800 | 5.0 | 65.5 | 15.4 |
| Segment One Mailing One | | | | | | | | |
| NRPs | 8,971 | 1,608 | 6,394 | 569 | 400 | 4.5 | 41.3 | 71.3 |
| PWCs | 11,026 | 4,895 | 5,425 | 299 | 407 | 3.7 | 57.6 | 49.2 |
| Total | 19,997 | 6,503 | 11,819 | 868 | 807 | 0.4 | 48.2 | 59.1 |
| Segment One Mailing Three | | | | | | | | |
| NRPs | 4,241 | 179 | 3,263 | 399 | 400 | 9.4 | 50.1 | 76.9 |
| PWCs | 3,709 | 171 | 2,952 | 186 | 400 | 10.8 | 68.3 | 79.6 |
| Total | 7,950 | 350 | 6,215 | 585 | 800 | 10.1 | 57.8 | 78.2 |
| Segment Two Baseline | | | | | | | | |
| NRPs | 7,893 | 613 | 6,535 | 345 | 400 | 5.1 | 53.7 | 82.8 |
| PWCs | 7,992 | 831 | 6,589 | 172 | 400 | 5.0 | 69.9 | 82.4 |
| Total | 15,885 | 1,444 | 13,124 | 517 | 800 | 5.0 | 60.7 | 82.6 |
| Segment Two Mailing One | | | | | | | | |
| NRPs | 2,911 | 217 | 1,902 | 384 | 408 | 14.0 | 51.5 | 65.3 |
| PWCs | 2,011 | 199 | 1,244 | 168 | 400 | 19.9 | 70.4 | 61.9 |
| Total | 4,922 | 416 | 3,146 | 552 | 808 | 16.4 | 59.4 | 63.9 |
| Segment Two Mailing Three | | | | | | | | |
| NRPs | 2,790 | 183 | 1,723 | 484 | 400 | 14.3 | 45.2 | 61.8 |
| PWCs | 1,421 | 633 | 194 | 194 | 400 | 28.1 | 67.3 | 13.7 |
| Total | 4,211 | 816 | 1,917 | 678 | 800 | 19.0 | 54.1 | 45.5 |

⁴ Total number of sample records provided to ICM by DWP.

10 Appendix C: Survey Profile of respondents

10.1 Segment One

10.1.1 Baseline

| Total base size: 800 | Unweighted proportions | Weighted proportions |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | | 42% |
| Female | | 58% |
| Parent type | | |
| PWC | | 42% |
| NRP | | 58% |
| Age | | |
| 16-24 | | 4% |
| 25-34 | | 36% |
| 35-44 | 26% | 38% |
| 45-54 | 13% | 19% |
| 55+ | 2% | 3% |
| Ethnicity | | |
| White | 82% | 80% |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups | 3% | 3% |
| Asian/Asian British | 5% | 5% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 9% | 10% |
| Other ethnic group | 2% | 2% |
| Disability/Long term illness | | |
| Yes – limited a lot | 10% | 12% |
| Yes – limited a little | 6% | 6% |
| No | 83% | 82% |
| Work status | | |
| Working full time (30+ hours a week) | 26% | 28% |
| Working part time (1-29 hours per week) | 23% | 26% |
| Unemployed, seeking work | 16% | 13% |
| Unemployed, not seeking work | 5% | 4% |
| Retired | 1% | 1% |
| Not working – disabled | 6% | 7% |
| Student | 7% | 5% |
| Not working – looking after household/children | 13% | 12% |
| Other | 5% | 5% |

10.1.2 Mailing One

| Total base size: 805 | Unweighted proportions | Weighted proportions |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 49% | 45% |
| Female | 51% | 55% |
| Parent type | | |
| PWC | 51% | 58% |
| NRP | 49% | 42% |
| Age | | |
| 16-24 | 3% | 2% |
| 25-34 | 26% | 33% |
| 35-44 | 44% | 43% |
| 45-54 | 23% | 20% |
| 55+ | 3% | 2% |
| Ethnicity | | |
| White | 91% | 91% |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups | 1% | 1% |
| Asian/Asian British | 3% | 3% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 4% | 4% |
| Other ethnic group | 1% | 1% |
| Disability/Long term illness | | |
| Yes – limited a lot | 12% | 12% |
| Yes – limited a little | 7% | 6% |
| No | 81% | 82% |
| Work status | | |
| Working full time (30+ hours a week) | 35% | 35% |
| Working part time (1-29 hours per week) | 24% | 24% |
| Unemployed, seeking work | 11% | 11% |
| Unemployed, not seeking work | 4% | 4% |
| Retired | * | * |
| Not working – disabled | 8% | 8% |
| Student | 2% | 2% |
| Not working – looking after household/children | 11% | 12% |
| Other | 5% | 4% |

10.1.3 Mailing Three

| Total base size: 800 | Unweighted proportions | Weighted proportions |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 50% | 48% |
| Female | 50% | 52% |
| Parent type | | |
| PWC | 50% | 52% |
| NRP | 50% | 48% |
| Age | | |
| 16-24 | 1% | 2% |
| 25-34 | 21% | 36% |
| 35-44 | 44% | 41% |
| 45-54 | 29% | 19% |
| 55+ | 4% | 2% |
| Ethnicity | | |
| White | 87% | 88% |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups | 2% | 2% |
| Asian/Asian British | 3% | 3% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 6% | 5% |
| Other ethnic group | 3% | 3% |
| Disability/Long term illness | | |
| Yes – limited a lot | 13% | 11% |
| Yes – limited a little | 6% | 5% |
| No | 82% | 83% |
| Work status | | |
| Working full time (30+ hours a week) | 31% | 33% |
| Working part time (1-29 hours per week) | 23% | 21% |
| Unemployed, seeking work | 10% | 9% |
| Unemployed, not seeking work | 7% | 7% |
| Retired | 1% | * |
| Not working – disabled | 7% | 7% |
| Student | 4% | 4% |
| Not working – looking after household/children | 12% | 13% |
| Other | 6% | 6% |

10.2 Segment Two

10.2.1 Baseline

| Total base size: 800 | Unweighted proportions | Weighted proportions |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 50% | 52% |
| Female | 50% | 48% |
| Parent type | | |
| PWC | 50% | 52% |
| NRP | 50% | 48% |
| Age | | |
| 16-24 | 4% | 5% |
| 25-34 | 32% | 41% |
| 35-44 | 39% | 37% |
| 45-54 | 21% | 16% |
| 55+ | 4% | 2% |
| Ethnicity | | |
| White | 85% | 85% |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups | 2% | 2% |
| Asian/Asian British | 5% | 5% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 6% | 5% |
| Other ethnic group | 2% | 2% |
| Disability/Long term illness | | |
| Yes – limited a lot | 9% | 8% |
| Yes – limited a little | 5% | 4% |
| No | 87% | 88% |
| Work status | | |
| Working full time (30+ hours a week) | 39% | 38% |
| Working part time (1-29 hours per week) | 28% | 29% |
| Unemployed, seeking work | 13% | 13% |
| Unemployed, not seeking work | 2% | 2% |
| Retired | 1% | * |
| Not working – disabled | 5% | 4% |
| Student | 2% | 2% |
| Not working – looking after household/children | 7% | 7% |
| Other | 4% | 4% |

10.2.2 Mailing One

| Total base size: 808 | Unweighted proportions | Weighted proportions |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 50% | 52% |
| Female | 50% | 48% |
| Parent type | | |
| PWC | 50% | 52% |
| NRP | 50% | 48% |
| Age | | |
| 16-34 | 37% | 46% |
| 35-44 | 38% | 37% |
| 45-54 | 21% | 16% |
| 55+ | 3% | 2% |
| Ethnicity | | |
| White | 88% | 88% |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups | 2% | 2% |
| Asian/Asian British | 3% | 3% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 5% | 5% |
| Other ethnic group | 2% | 2% |
| Disability/Long term illness | | |
| Yes – limited a lot | 13% | 13% |
| Yes – limited a little | 6% | 6% |
| No | 82% | 82% |
| Work status | | |
| Working full time (30+ hours a week) | 36% | 36% |
| Working part time (1-29 hours per week) | 23% | 23% |
| Unemployed, seeking work | 12% | 12% |
| Unemployed, not seeking work | 5% | 5% |
| Retired | 1% | 1% |
| Not working – disabled | 5% | 5% |
| Student | 1% | 1% |
| Not working – looking after household/children | 13% | 13% |
| Other | 4% | 4% |

10.2.3 Mailing Three

| Total base size: 800 | Unweighted proportions | Weighted proportions |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 49% | 50% |
| Female | 51% | 50% |
| Parent type | | |
| PWC | 51% | 50% |
| NRP | 49% | 50% |
| Age | | |
| 16-24 | 2% | 2% |
| 25-34 | 23% | 34% |
| 35-44 | 43% | 40% |
| 45-54 | 27% | 21% |
| 55+ | 5% | 3% |
| Ethnicity | | |
| White | 85% | 85% |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups | 3% | 3% |
| Asian/Asian British | 2% | 2% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 7% | 7% |
| Other ethnic group | 3% | 3% |
| Disability/Long term illness | | |
| Yes – limited a lot | 9% | 8% |
| Yes – limited a little | 7% | 6% |
| No | 84% | 85% |
| Work status | | |
| Working full time (30+ hours a week) | 42% | 42% |
| Working part time (1-29 hours per week) | 24% | 24% |
| Unemployed, seeking work | 6% | 6% |
| Unemployed, not seeking work | 4% | 3% |
| Retired | * | * |
| Not working – disabled | 4% | 4% |
| Student | 1% | 2% |
| Not working – looking after household/children | 9% | 10% |
| Other | 9% | 9% |

11 Appendix D: Statistical significance and confidence intervals

The respondents to each of the six surveys are only samples of the total CSA Client “population”, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody in either Segment One or Segment Two databases had been interviewed (the “true” values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the “true” values from knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “95% confidence interval”.

Table 11.1

| Size of sample on which survey result is based | Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels | | |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|
| | Statistical Reliability | | |
| | 10% / 90% | 30% / 70% | 50% / 50% |
| 50 interviews | 8.4 | 12.8 | 14.0 |
| 78 interviews | 6.7 | 10.2 | 11.2 |
| 100 interviews | 5.9 | 9.0 | 9.8 |
| 400 interviews | 2.9 | 4.5 | 4.9 |
| 500 interviews | 2.6 | 4.0 | 4.4 |
| 800 interviews | 2.1 | 3.2 | 3.5 |

For example, with a sample of 800 where 30% give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the “true” value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points (+/-3.2%) from the sample result. In a sample of 78 (i.e. Segment One clients who have heard, read or seen changes to the CSA in the Baseline survey) where 30% give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the “true” value will fall within the range of plus or minus 10.2 percentage points (+/-10.2%).

12 Appendix E: Communications Timetable

| Communication | Timings sent |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Mailing One Letter and Leaflet | 6 months before end of liability date |
| Mailing-2 Letter and Leaflet | 30 days before end of liability date |
| Mailing Three letter | Immediately after end of liability date |