



# Effective Family-based Child Maintenance Arrangements

Data up to March 2016

● Annual

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Great Britain

Official

The Government's child maintenance reforms aim to maximise the number of children benefiting from effective child maintenance arrangements. These arrangements can be through the court system, the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) or Family-based Arrangements (FBA).

Child Maintenance Options (CM Options) was created to help separated parents choose the child maintenance arrangement that best suits them. It provides free impartial information and support to help parents make informed choices about child maintenance.

## Main Stories

**Over 1 in 4 CM Options customers set up FBAs**

after contact with CM Options from April 2015 to March 2016

**193,400 children benefiting**

from an Effective FBA after contact with CM Options, up to March 2016

26%

193,400

## At a glance

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Feedback is welcome

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## What you need to know

Since November 2013, the CM Options service has been the mandatory gateway to the Child Maintenance Service. Separated parents must talk to CM Options before they are able to access the CMS and put in place a statutory arrangement.

DWP introduced incentives in the current statutory CMS to encourage parents to consider setting up an FBA instead of applying to the statutory CMS. CM Options plays a vital role in this by continuing to support separated parents but encouraging them to choose an FBA where this is a viable and appropriate option.

The statutory CMS is available for those parents who are unable to create an FBA. Parents who are unable to make an agreement through the CMS still have the option of using the court system to reach an agreement.

DWP monitors CM Options' effectiveness at helping separated parents to secure arrangements. This is done through regular customer telephone surveys, the results of which are reported in this publication.

## FBAs, Effectiveness and Children Benefiting

Effective FBAs are child maintenance arrangements between separated parents defined as either:

- a. Regular financial agreement where at least some of the agreed maintenance amount is always/usually received on time and parent being surveyed considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well.
- b. An ad-hoc arrangement which includes a financial element (or transaction in kind e.g. school uniform) and the parent being surveyed considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well.

“Other Effective FBAs” are FBAs not secured as a result of contact with CM Options.

Children Benefiting is the number of children covered by an effective FBA.

A parent could have several different child maintenance arrangements. In order to avoid double counting a hierarchy has been applied.

For further details see the Background Information document:

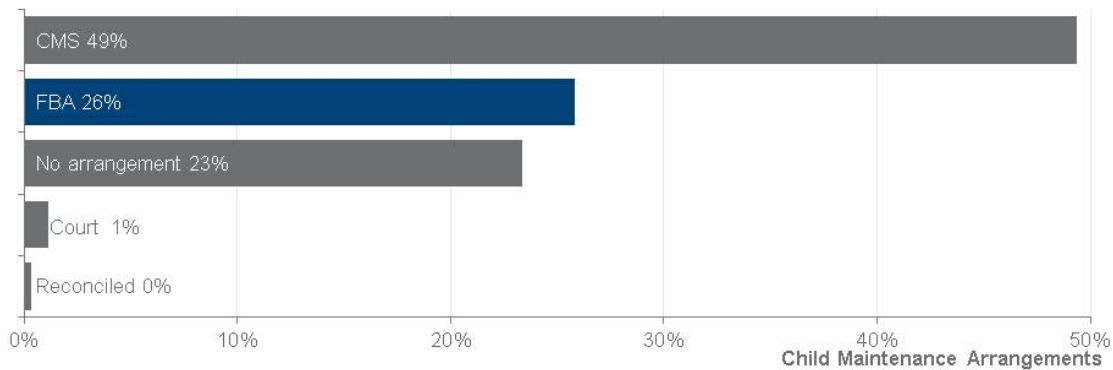
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/effective-family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-statistics-background-information-and-methodology>

# Child Maintenance Arrangements in the past year

Out of the 297,000 customers that had contact with CM Options between February 2015 and January 2016, 226,700 set up a child maintenance arrangement. This publication discusses the outcomes of this group from April 2015 to March 2016.

## Over 1 in 4 CM Options customers in the last year set up an FBA

### CM Options Customers Child Maintenance Outcomes between April 2015 and March 2016



26% of CM Options customers in 2015/16 set up FBAs. This is consistent from last year.

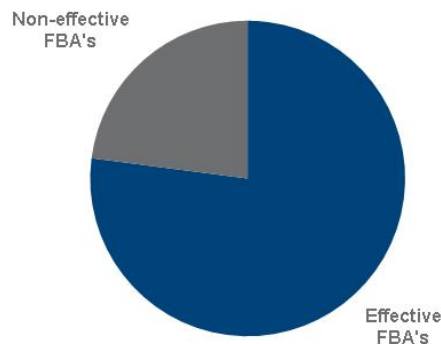
Nearly half (49%) of arrangements set up were with the CMS. This is a slight decrease from the previous year.

23% of customers had not agreed a child maintenance arrangement after contacting CM Options.

See **Table 1** for full summary statistics.

## Of which over three quarters are effective

### Percentage of FBAs which are effective from April 2015 to March 2016



77% of customers with an FBA in the last year had one that was effective.

This is consistent with previous year's data, during which 74% of all customers with an FBA had one that was effective.

See **Table 2** for full data.

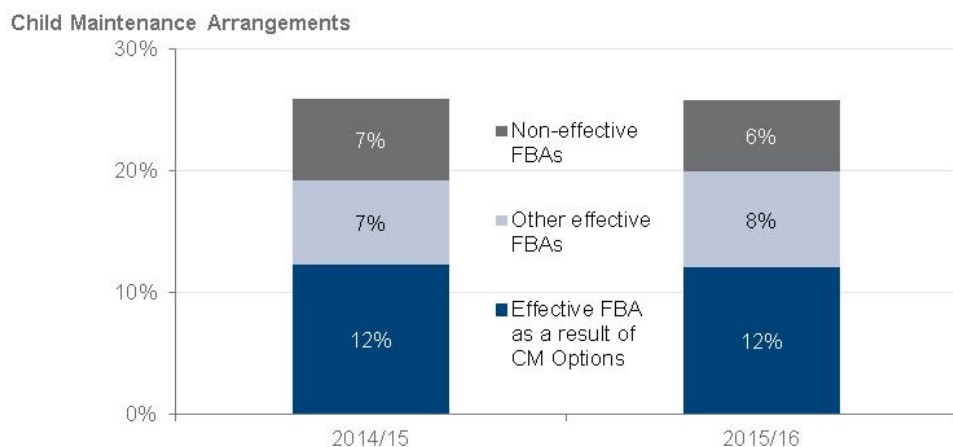
# Effective Family-based Arrangements

## 12% of CM Options customers set up effective FBAs after contact with CM Options between April 2015 and March 2016

The percentage of customers that set up an effective FBA after contact with CM Options remained stable at 12% from last year.

See **Table 1** for full data.

### The Percentage of CM Options customers each year opting for an FBA



26% of CM Options customers arranged an FBA between April 2015 and March 2016. 35,900 of these FBAs were effective, 17,600 were non-effective and 23,300 were classed as “Other effective FBAs”.

Of the 35,900 effective FBAs set up during the year, 33,700 were still effective by March 2016.

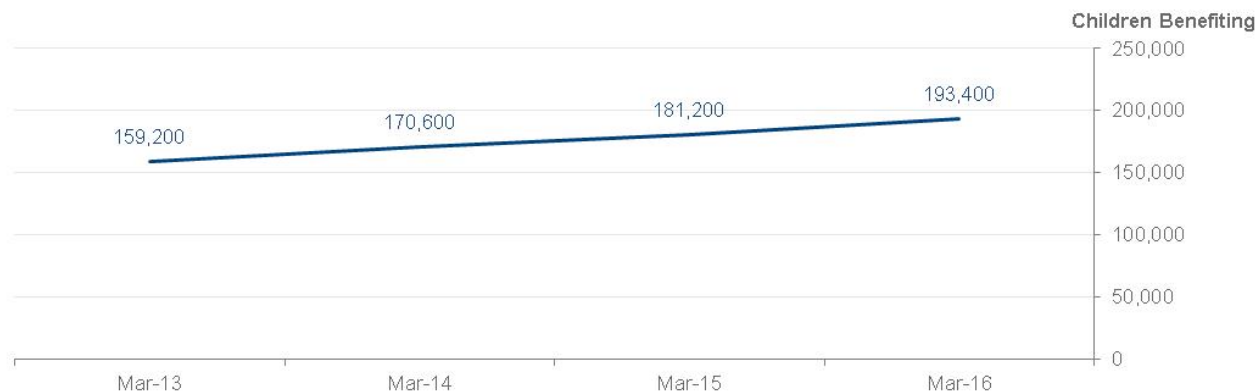
## 132,200 CM Options customers currently have effective FBAs set up since the service was created in July 2008

The number of CM Options customers with effective FBAs after contact with CM Options is at its highest level since the service was set up. It increased by 15,600 FBAs between April 2015 and March 2016.

# Children Benefiting

## 193,400 Children Benefiting from effective FBAs since CM Options began

Total Children Benefiting from effective FBAs set up after contact with CM Options since July 2008



NB: The figures for children benefiting differ from previous publications due to a change in methodology.

In March 2016, a further 12,200 children were benefiting from effective FBAs set up after contact with CM Options. This continues a small and consistent year-on-year increase in the number of children benefiting. This contrasts with the continuous fall in the average number of children benefiting per effective FBA which has dropped from 1.7 in March 2013 to 1.5 in March 2016.

## 49,200 new Children Benefiting from effective FBAs after contact with CM Options this year

From April 2015 to March 2016, 35,900 CM Options customers set up effective FBAs after contact with CM Options. This is a slight increase on the previous year where 32,200 customers set up effective FBAs. As of the end of March 2016, 33,700 of these customers' FBAs remain effective.

49,200 children will be benefiting from these FBAs as of the end of March 2016.

Full details of the Children Benefiting calculation can be found in the accompanying Background Information document and detailed figures can be found in in **Table 3**.

## About these statistics

The data is produced through quarterly and annual longitudinal surveys conducted by the CM Options supplier on behalf of the DWP.

The target population is composed of separated parents who have had a full telephone conversation with CM Options.

The results are weighted up to the population of telephony customers who had a full conversation with CM Options to ensure the results are representative

Certain types of customers are excluded from the sampling frame for practical purposes, including non-English speakers and customers who opt out of being contacted for research purposes.

These statistics have been developed using guidelines set out by the UK Statistics Authority.

## Where to find out more

This document and the summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/effective-family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-preliminary-estimates-march-2016>

Older releases: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-statistics>

How we plan to evaluate child maintenance reform: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/387584/child-maintenance-reforms-evaluation-strategy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387584/child-maintenance-reforms-evaluation-strategy.pdf)

The Child Maintenance Options website has further information on their work: <http://www.cmoptions.org/>