

# Child Maintenance Service Statistics

Data for August 2013 to March 2018

Quarterly

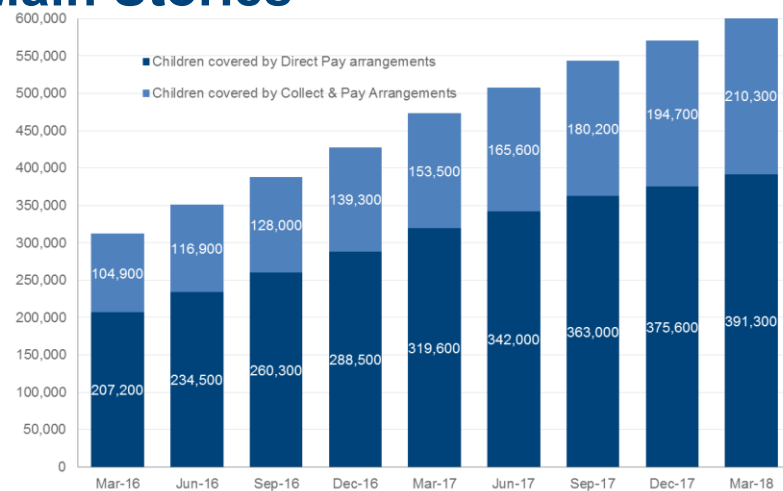
Published: 20 June 2018  
Great Britain

Official  
Experimental

The Child Maintenance Service was introduced in December 2012 as part of the Government's Child Maintenance Reforms. It replaced the Child Support Agency (CSA) and is for separated parents who can't arrange child maintenance between themselves. The Service can calculate the amount of maintenance to be paid and parents can arrange the payments between themselves. This is called **Direct Pay**. If parents cannot do this or they don't pay what was agreed, then the Child Maintenance Service can collect and manage the payments between the parents. This is the **Collect & Pay** service. The Service has a range of enforcement actions it can use if the Paying Parent refuses to pay their child maintenance.

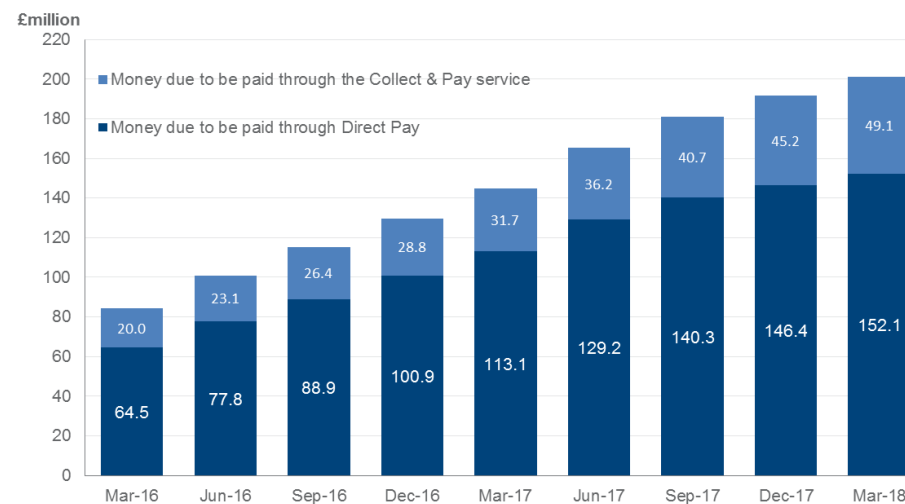
This publication gives information on the performance of the Child Maintenance Service between August 2013 and March 2018.

## Main Stories



**601,600 children** are covered by Child Maintenance Service arrangements.

- **391,300** through Direct Pay arrangements
- **210,300** through the Collect & Pay Service



**Child Maintenance due to be paid:**

- **£201.2 million** between January and March 2018.
- **£739.2 million** in the last 12 months
- **£1,637.6 million** since the service began

## At a glance

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69% of Paying Parents are using Direct Pay

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£201.2 million was due to be paid in Child Maintenance between January and March 2018.

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Feedback is welcome

Published 20 June 2018

Next edition: September 2018

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## What you need to know

**Child maintenance** is financial support between separated parents to help with the everyday costs of looking after children.

If they agree, separated parents can arrange child maintenance themselves. This is called a '**family-based arrangement**' and is a private way to sort out child maintenance. Parents arrange everything themselves and no-one else has to be involved. **Many children are covered by family-based arrangements.**

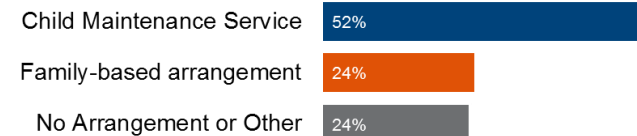
**The Child Maintenance Service** which replaces the Child Support Agency (CSA) is for when parents can't agree to a family-based arrangement. Parents wishing to use the Child Maintenance Service must first speak to Child Maintenance Options (Options).

**Child Maintenance Options** is a free service that provides impartial information and support to help separated parents make decisions about their child maintenance arrangements.

Between August and October 2017:



**56,800 people had a conversation with Options. They then went on to setup...**



For further information and statistics on Child Maintenance Options and family-based arrangements please see the quarterly survey results of parents who speak to Child Maintenance Options:

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

## Parents, Compliance, Children Covered and Case Closure

- The "**Receiving Parent**" has the main day-to-day care of the children and receives the child maintenance.
- The "**Paying Parent**" doesn't have main day-to-day care of the children and pays child maintenance.
- **Children Covered** is the number of children who the paying parent has a child maintenance arrangement for.
- **Compliance** is where parents using the Collect & Pay service have paid some child maintenance in the last three months.
- **Case Closure** is the process of ending the liability and closing all cases on the CSA. Parents are then encouraged to contact Options to discuss their child maintenance needs.

For more details see the Background Information document:

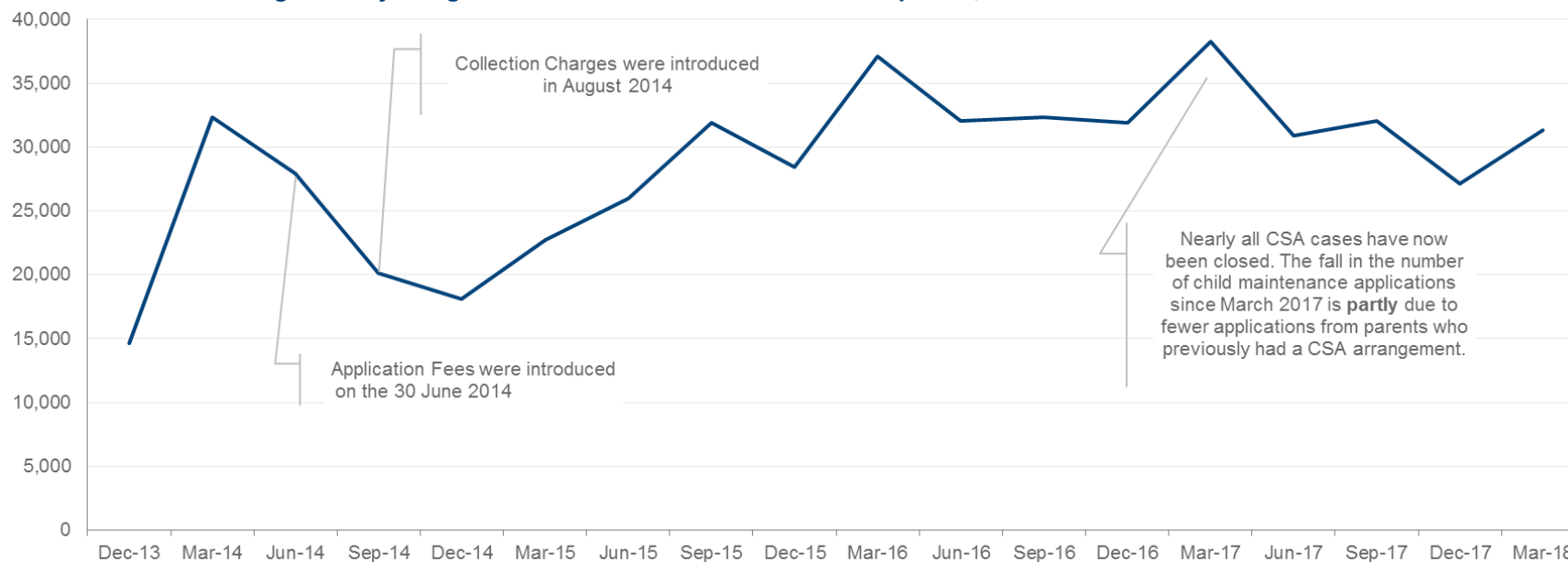
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-maintenance-service-2012-scheme-experimental-statistics-background-information-and-methodology>

# Applications to the Child Maintenance Service

Between January and March 2018, 31,800 applications were made to the Child Maintenance Service.

- 31,300 of these applications were successful.

Child Maintenance Arrangements joining the Child Maintenance Service each quarter, December 2013 to March 2018



New arrangements joining the Child Maintenance Service are from:

- Parents making their first arrangement.
- Parents who previously had an arrangement with the CSA. CSA cases are being closed so parents are encouraged to make a new family-based arrangement or an arrangement through the Child Maintenance Service.

**At the end of March 2018: The Child Maintenance Service was managing 415,000 arrangements with 389,600 Paying Parents**

See **Tables 1-4** for more information on the number of applications and arrangements with the Child Maintenance Service.

## The Composition of the Child Maintenance Service's cases

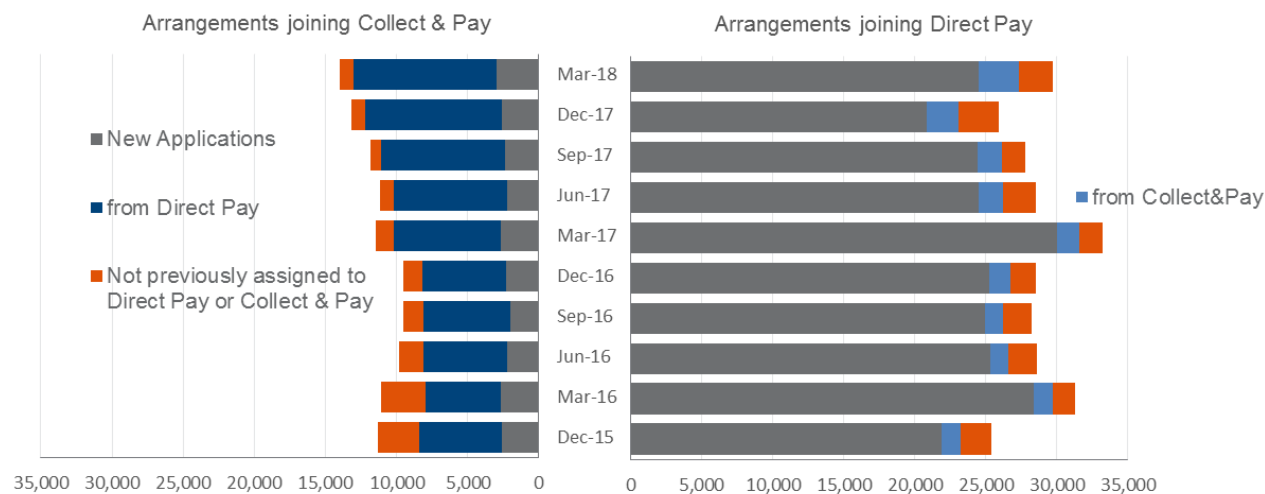
When a parent makes an application with the Child Maintenance Service, they will be told how much child maintenance should be paid. Some parents will then arrange the payments between themselves, which is called **Direct Pay**. If the parents cannot do this or they don't pay, the Child Maintenance Service have the Collect & Pay service which can collect and manage the payments between the parents.

If payments are not being made by parents using Direct Pay, the Receiving Parent can ask the Child Maintenance Service to step in and switch the case to the Collect & Pay service. The Child Maintenance Service will then begin collecting the payments and any child maintenance that was previously unpaid through Direct Pay.

As parents working together is better for children, the Child Maintenance Service encourages parents to collaborate by applying collection charges for using the Collect & Pay service. Paying Parents are charged 20% of their child maintenance and Receiving Parents 4% to use the Collect & Pay service. The majority of parents choose to use Direct Pay rather than the Collect & Pay service.

**At the end of March 2018, 69% of Paying Parents are using Direct Pay and 33% the Collect & Pay Service. 3% of Paying Parents use both services.**

**Arrangements moving between Direct Pay and Collect & Pay, quarters ending December 2014 to March 2018**



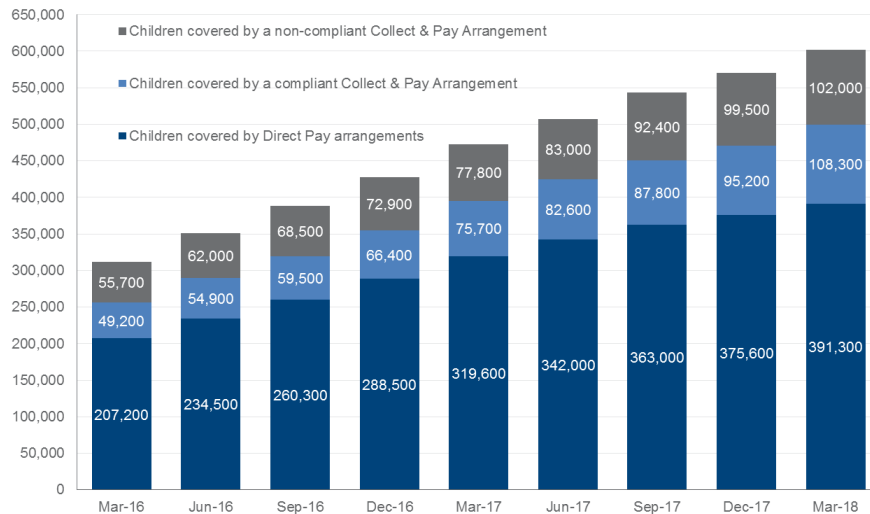
- The majority of new applications to the Child Maintenance Service choose to use Direct Pay.
- More parents move from Direct Pay to Collect & Pay than from Collect & Pay to Direct Pay. 10,000 moved from Direct Pay to Collect & Pay between January and March 2018.
- Since March 2017 the percentage of Paying Parents using the Collect & Pay service has slowly increased from **30%** to **33%** as more cases switch from Direct Pay to the Collect & Pay service each quarter.

See **Table 5 and 6** for full data.

# Children covered by the Child Maintenance Service

## 601,600 children are covered by the Child Maintenance Service

### Children covered by Direct Pay or Collect & Pay arrangements, quarters ending March 2016 to March 2018



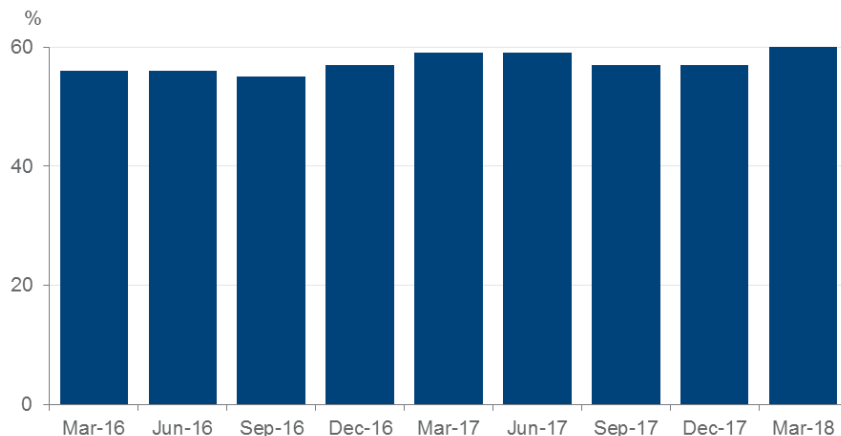
- **391,300** children are covered by Direct Pay arrangements.
- **210,300** children are covered by arrangements through the Collect & Pay service.
  - **108,300** children received some child maintenance through the Collect & Pay service between January and March 2018.

The number of children covered by Direct Pay or compliant Collect & Pay arrangements continues to increase each quarter as the number of cases managed by the Child Maintenance Service continues to increase.

See **Table 10** for more information.

## Three fifths of Paying Parents using the Collect & Pay service are paying some of their child maintenance

### Percentage of Paying Parents using Collect & Pay who are compliant during the quarter, quarters ending March 2016 to March 2018



Between January and March 2018, **60%** of Paying Parents using the Collect & Pay service were compliant. This means that **68,400** Paying Parents paid at least some of their due child maintenance between January and March 2018.

Compliance has increased in the last quarter despite continuing increases in the number of Parents switching from Direct Pay to using the Collect & Pay service.

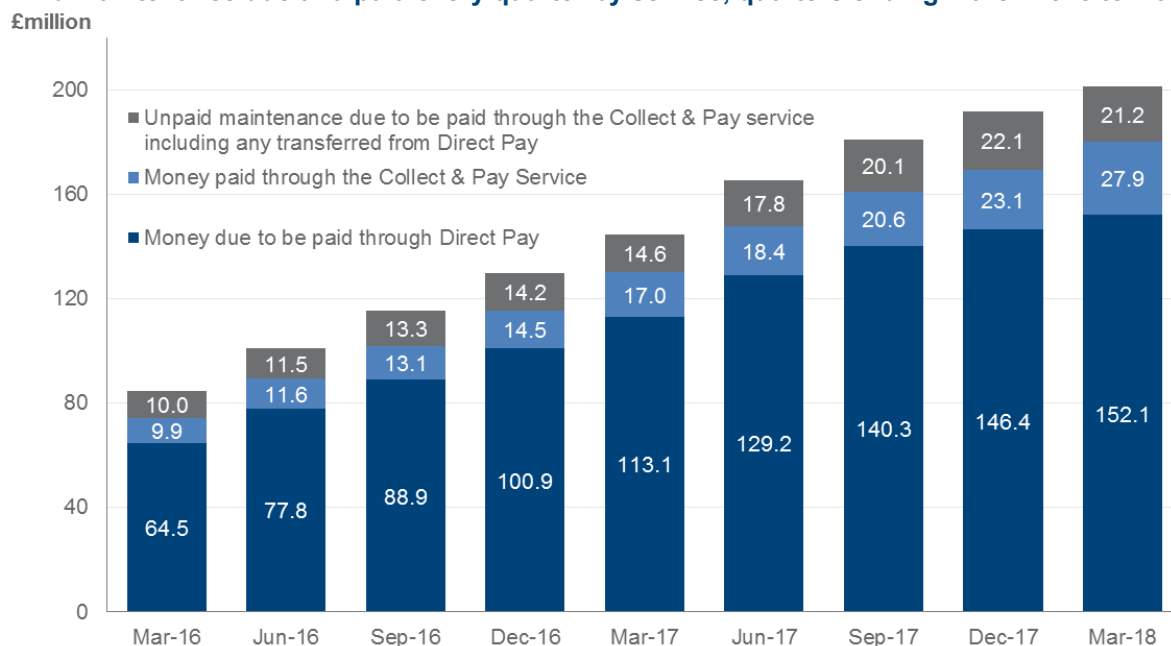
See **Table 7** for full data

## Child Maintenance Due and Paid

The Child Maintenance Service monitors payments made through the Collect & Pay service and can take enforcement action if payments are not made. For parents using Direct Pay, if payments are not being made the Receiving Parent can ask that the case is switched to the Collect & Pay Service. This means that the Collect & Pay service will consist of parents who may be less likely to pay than those using Direct Pay and that cases moved from Direct Pay are likely to already have unpaid child maintenance.

### £201.2 million was due to be paid in Child Maintenance between January and March 2018

#### Child Maintenance due and paid every quarter by service, quarters ending March 2016 to March 2018



In the quarter ending March 2018, **£201.2m** Child Maintenance was due to be paid.

- **£180m** was paid through the Collect & Pay service or due to be paid through Direct Pay arrangements.
  - **£152.1m** was due to be paid through Direct Pay arrangements.
  - **£27.9m** was paid through the Collect & Pay service.

The amount of money due to be paid through the Child Maintenance Service continues to rise as the number of parents using the service increases.

Since the Child Maintenance Service began there is a total of **£197.8m** unpaid child maintenance which should have been paid through the Collect & Pay service. This includes unpaid child maintenance from Direct Pay cases which have been transferred to Collect & Pay.

- **This is 12%** of all child maintenance due to have been paid since the service began (**£1637.6m**).

See table **8 and 9** for more information.

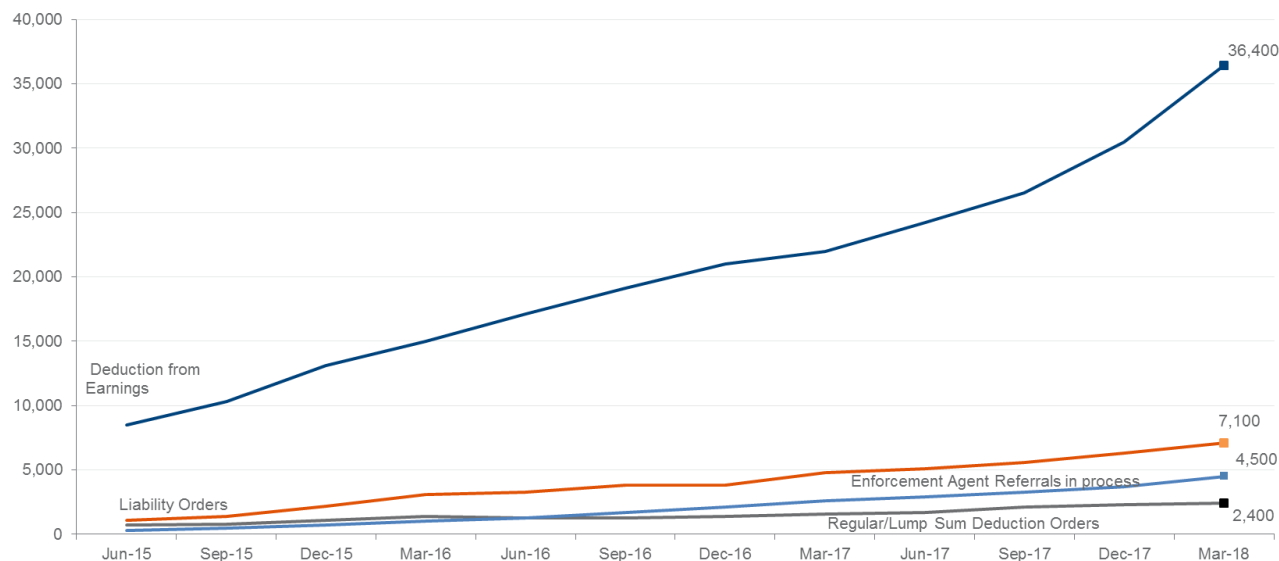
# Enforcement

When a payment is missed, the Child Maintenance Service will contact the Paying Parent to find out why they haven't paid and arrange for them to pay what they owe or warn them about actions that might be taken if they don't pay. If the Paying Parent doesn't respond, the Child Maintenance Service can take action to get the child maintenance owed. If the Paying Parent is using the Collect & Pay service then this will happen automatically. If the parents are paying the child maintenance between themselves (Direct Pay) then the Receiving Parent needs to ask the Child Maintenance Service to take action.

The Child Maintenance Service can collect unpaid child maintenance in 3 different ways:

1. Take money from the Paying Parent's earnings through a **deduction from earnings order/request**. The Child Maintenance Service will tell the Paying Parent's employer how much to take from their wages. The employer must then pass on the money or they can be taken to court.
2. Money can be taken directly from the Paying Parent's bank or building society account by using a **deduction order**.
3. A Paying Parent can be taken to court over unpaid child maintenance. The courts can grant **liability orders** which allow the parent to be referred to Enforcement Agents who could come and sell property to pay the unpaid maintenance and any costs. The courts could also apply a **charging order** to force the parent to sell property and use the money to pay off the unpaid maintenance. If these methods fail the Child Maintenance Service can apply for the courts to disqualify the parent from driving or send them to prison.

## The number of enforcement actions taking place, quarters ending June 2015 to March 2018



### At the end of March 2018:

- **36,400** deductions from earnings orders and requests were in place.
- **7,100** liability orders were in process.
- **2,400** regular and lump sum deduction orders were in place.
- **4,500** Enforcement Agent Referrals were in process.

In the quarter ending March 2018, **£22.9m** was collected from parents undergoing Enforcement actions on the Collect & Pay service. This was **82%** of all money collected and paid to parents through the Collect & Pay service.

See **Table 11** for full data.

## 1,640 cases were referred to the Financial Investigations Unit and 755 were completed between January and March 2018

For more information on the Financial Investigations Unit see table 12.

## About these statistics

Comparisons between these statistics on the Child Maintenance Service and the CSA should not be made as the two services have different aims and cover different groups. The Government's changes to the child maintenance system in 2012 were designed to encourage parents to work together to provide for their children. Child Maintenance Options was created to support parents to set up collaborative, family-based child maintenance arrangements. The Child Maintenance Service was intended for those parents who cannot make family-based arrangements.

Information on the Child Maintenance Service continues to be developed and tested. Additional measures and tables will be included in future publications when DWP statisticians are comfortable with the quality of the data.

Figures contained within this publication are rounded to the nearest hundred or percent. Percentages are calculated prior to rounding.

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

## Changes to the publication

This publication contains some changes as well as new measures:

- We have removed the most recent quarter's figures for applications cleared within 6 and 12 weeks from **Table 1: Applications to the Child Maintenance Service**. Many of these applications will not have had sufficient time to hit the targets by the time the publication is released and the figures are misleading. These figures will be updated retrospectively when the majority of applications are more than 6 and 12 weeks old.
- **Table 7: Parents switching to and from the Direct Pay service** has been replaced by **Table 5: Changes to the Child Maintenance Service Caseload**. Table 5 now shows more information around how cases are 'switching' between services.
- An issue was discovered where a small number of arrangements that were closed were being counted as part of the caseload. These have been removed and historic figures have been corrected. This affects **Table 4: Caseload**.
- A problem was discovered with **Table 10: Children covered by the Child Maintenance Service** where children were being incorrectly allocated to Direct Pay and the Collect & Pay Service. If a parent was using both services then the children from all of the parent's arrangements would be allocated to one of the services. This issue has been rectified and previous figures have been updated.
  - The number of children covered by non-paying Collect & Pay arrangements has been included for the first time.
- In **Table 15: Mandatory Reconsiderations** the percentage cleared within 20 days is based on the total number of requests received whereas previously it was based on total requests cleared.

## Where to find out more

This document and the summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-aug-2013-to-mar-2018-experimental>

Older releases: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-the-2012-statutory-child-maintenance-scheme>

The Child Maintenance Service website has further information: <https://www.gov.uk/child-maintenance>

Information and statistics on Family-based child maintenance arrangements can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-statistics>