

Withdrawn

This publication is withdrawn.

This publication is no longer current.

The Government is committed to evaluating the 2012 child maintenance reforms by the end of 2016. A key aim of the 'Child Maintenance Reforms Evaluation Strategy' is to evaluate the impact of the child maintenance reforms in wider society. This publication provides figures on the numbers of separated families in the general population and the different types of child maintenance arrangements. In particular, it looks at the number of family based arrangements and children benefiting from these.

Main stories

**Size of the separated
family population in
2013-14**

**2.6 million
separated
families**

**Effective family based
arrangements have
decreased**

**29 % 2011-12
26 % 2013-14**

**Children benefiting from
child maintenance
arrangements in 2013-14**

**1.4 million
children
benefiting from a
family based
arrangement**

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Comments? Feedback is welcome

Published 27th October 2016

ISBN: 978-1-78425-872-6

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What you need to know

In 2012 the Government set out its vision for a new child maintenance landscape in which parents would not rely on state intervention but would instead make collaborative family-based arrangements (FBAs) where possible.

In order to monitor the impact of the reforms and the introduction of charging the Government is committed to an evaluation of the reforms 30 months after the introduction of charging - . December 2016. Further evaluation of the reforms will continue after December 2016.

The published Child Maintenance Reforms Evaluation Strategy states that we will measure the level of family based arrangements in the general population. This will be derived largely from analysis of child maintenance data from the Understanding Society (USoc) survey.

Child Maintenance modules are included within the USoc survey every two years. The scope of this analysis encompasses two Waves of fieldwork; Wave 3 and 5:

- Wave 3 fieldwork was carried out between January 2011 and December 2012
- Wave 5 fieldwork was carried out between January 2013 and December 2014

Therefore the figures using Wave 3 data from 2011-12 will be used as a baseline to measure changes going forward.

At present no single data source provides definitive estimates of the number of separated families and the types of maintenance arrangements they have in place. Although data from USoc survey is publicly available, these statistics are the first on the separated family population that have been published in this way.

This analysis uses a combination of USoc data from 2012 and 2014, administrative data on 2012/2014 [Child Support Agency Statistics](#) published in the [Quarterly Summary Statistics 2016](#) and data from [ONS from the Labour Force Survey](#) from 2012 and 2014.

These statistics will give clarity to the data on the separated family population. The information contained in these statistics will be used to inform the evaluation of the 30 month review of the 2012 child maintenance reforms.

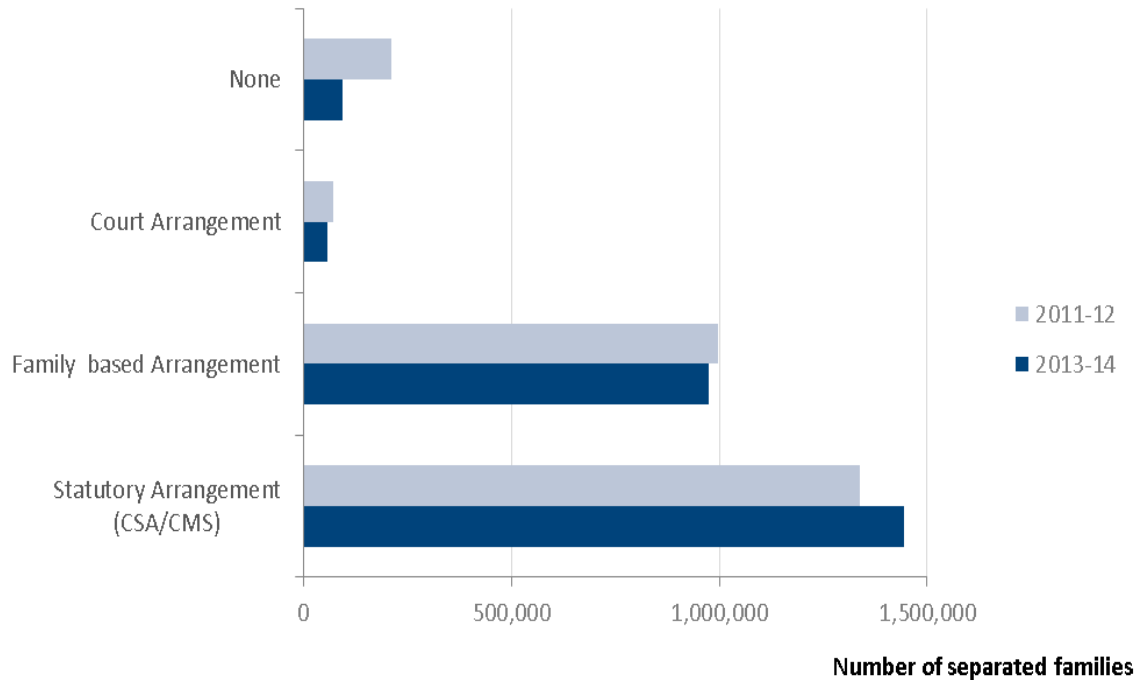
What is a separated family?

A separated family is defined as one receiving parent, one paying parent (who is non resident) and any children they have between them who are either under 16, or under 20 and in full time non-tertiary education.

Separated family population estimates

Child Maintenance arrangement types in 2011-12 and 2013-14

See **Table 1** in accompanying Excel spread sheet for full data.



In 2011-12:

- There were 2.6 million separated families.
- Over half (51 per cent) were separated families who had a statutory arrangement.
- Nearly 40 per cent had a voluntary or family based arrangement (FBA), 8 per cent had no arrangement and 3 per cent had a court based arrangement.

In 2013-14:

- There were 2.6 million separated families.
- There was an increase in statutory arrangements compared to 2011-12 and over half (56 per cent) of the population had a statutory maintenance arrangement.
- Again nearly 40 per cent had an FBA, 4 per cent had no arrangement and 2 per cent had a court based arrangement.

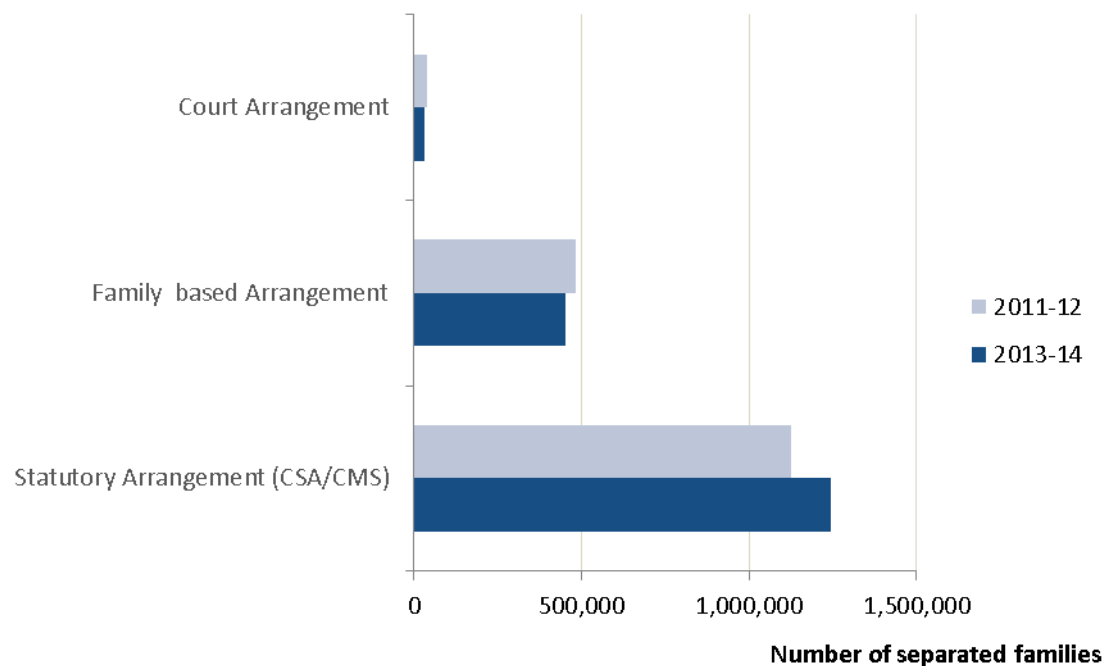
More information

There are different child maintenance arrangements covered in this analysis, which can be described by the following types:

- Statutory - Child Support Agency (CSA) or Child Maintenance Service (CMS). That is, clients who came into contact with the CSA or CMS. The 2012 child maintenance scheme was introduced using a staged implementation process starting in Dec 2012 when the scheme was initially opened to those with 4 qualifying children with the same parents through to Nov 2013 when it was opened to all new applications
- Court - court arrangement is in place
- Family-based - where a voluntary or private arrangement is in place. These arrangements are made privately between the Paying Parent (PP) and the Receiving Parent (RP) and they can be varied and include both financial and non-financial element
- None - where no arrangement is in place

Effective child maintenance arrangements

Number of separated families with an effective arrangement, 2011-12 and 2013-14



See **Tables 2 and 3** in accompanying spread sheet for full data.

In 2011-12:

- 63 per cent of all child maintenance arrangements were effective.
- Statutory child maintenance arrangements amounted to 68 per cent of all effective arrangements followed by family based (29 per cent) and court based arrangements (2 per cent).
- Overall there were 1.7 million effective child maintenance arrangements.

In 2013-14:

- 67 per cent of all child maintenance arrangements were effective – in an increase of 4 percentage points from 2011-12.
- Statutory child maintenance arrangements amounted to 72 per cent of all effective arrangements followed by family based (26 per cent) and court based arrangements (2 per cent).
- Overall there were 1.7 million effective child maintenance arrangements.

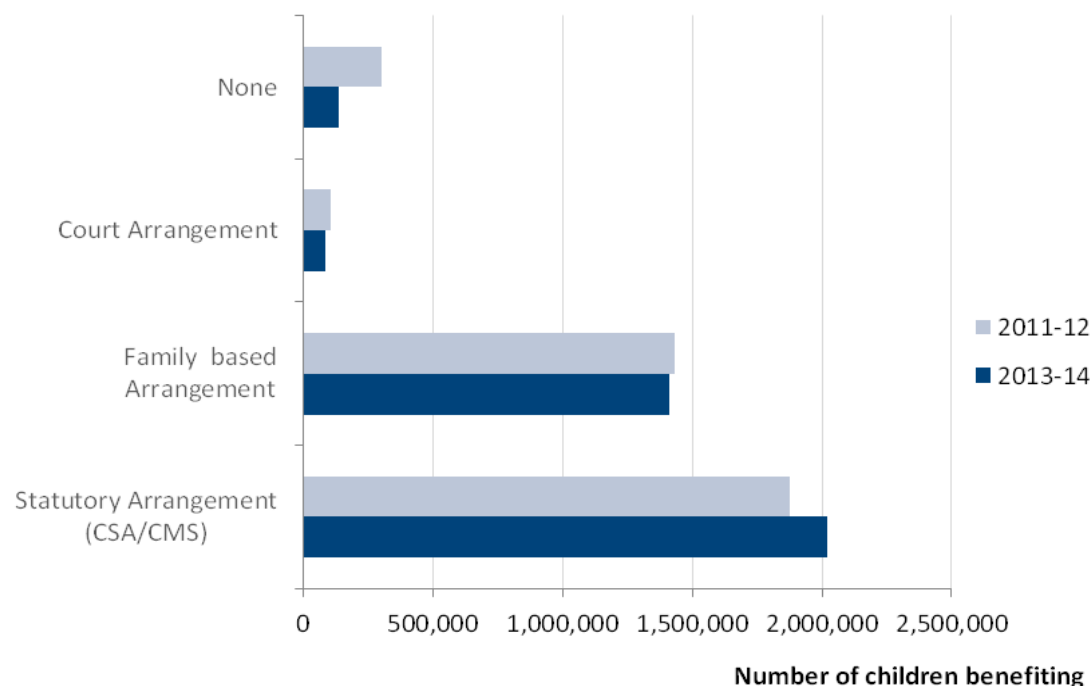
How is effectiveness measured? - The effectiveness of a FBA assesses how the arrangement is working in terms of its timeliness, proportion of payment received and how well the recipient believes the arrangement is working. An effective FBA is one where all the following criteria are judged satisfactory. It is described as:

- 1) A regular financial arrangement where at least some of the agreed amount is always/usually received on time and the parent considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well; or
- 2) An ad hoc arrangement which includes a financial element (or transaction in kind e.g. school uniform) and whether the parent considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well.

For this analysis, court based arrangements are deemed effective according to the above. Effectiveness for statutory arrangements is taken from administrative data, and is measured as the proportion of cases with a positive liability who are contributing towards this liability (positive outcome).

Children benefiting from a child maintenance arrangement

Number of children benefiting from a child maintenance arrangement 2011-12 and 2013-14



See **Table 4** in accompanying spread sheet for full data

In 2011-12:

- There were 3.7 million children in the separated family population with 3.4 million benefiting from a child maintenance arrangement.
- Over half of these (1.9 million) benefited from a statutory arrangement, nearly 40 per cent (slightly over 1.4 million) from a FBA and 3 per cent (100,000) from court arrangements. 8 per cent (300,000) of children were in separated families where there was no arrangement.

In 2013-14:

- There were 3.7 million children in the separated family population with 3.5 million benefiting from a child maintenance arrangement.
- Over half of these (2.0 million) benefited from a statutory arrangement, nearly 40 per cent (slightly over 1.4 million) from a family based arrangement and 2 per cent (80,000) from court arrangements. 4 per cent (140,000) of children were in separated families where there was no arrangement.

More information on the analysis in this release

These data are compiled using cross sectional populations from USoc for Waves 3 (2011-12) and 5 (2013-14) and show the 'stock' of the separated family population. This means that they show the situation from a specific point in time. In this case at the times contained in each wave of the survey; 2011-12 or 2013-14. However USoc is primarily a longitudinal survey. To look at the effects of policy changes with more accuracy over time requires analysis which follows the 'flow' of families through the survey Waves.

Children benefiting from a child maintenance arrangement

Number of children benefiting from an effective child maintenance arrangement 2011-12 and 2013-14

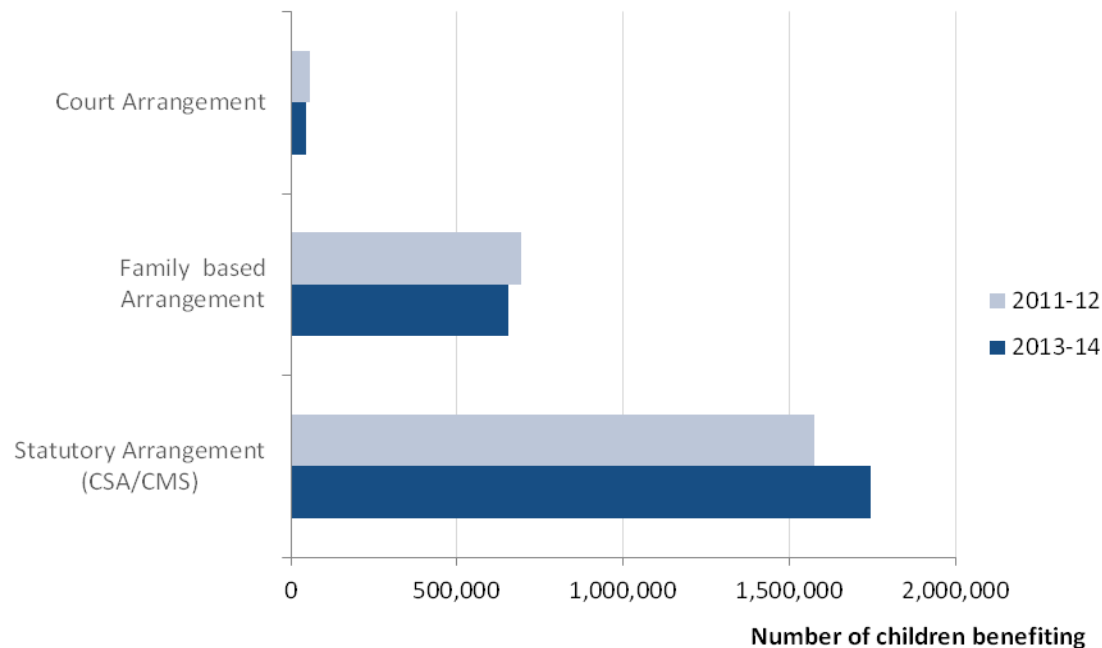
See **Table 4** of accompanying spread sheet for full data.

In 2011-12:

- Of the 3.7 million children benefiting from child maintenance arrangements, 2.3 million were benefiting from effective arrangements. This was 63 per cent of all arrangements.
- Nearly 70 per cent (1.6 million) of these benefited from an effective statutory arrangement. 30 per cent (0.7 million) benefited from an effective FBA and 2 per cent (<0.1 million) from a Court arrangement.

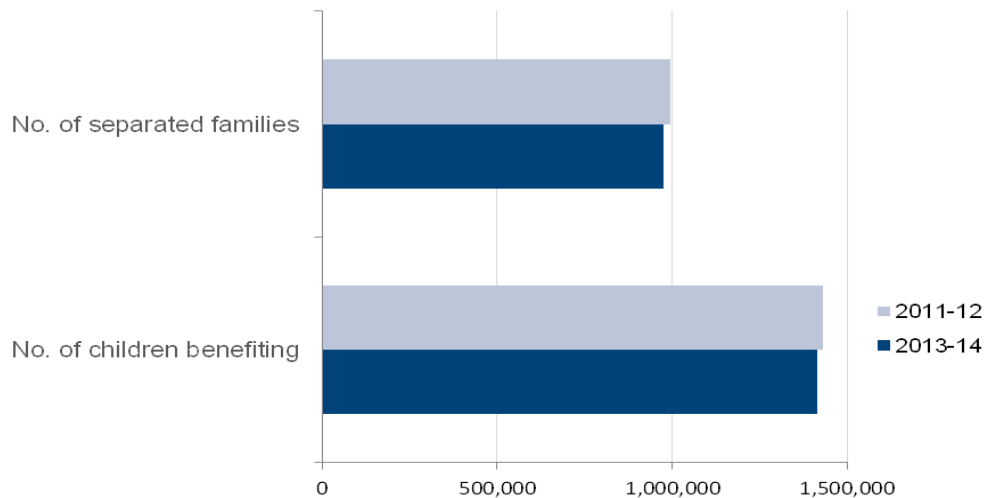
In 2013-14:

- Of the 3.7 million children benefiting from child maintenance arrangements, 2.5 million were benefiting from effective arrangements. This was an increase to 67 per cent of all arrangements.
- Over 70 per cent (1.7 million) of these benefited from an effective statutory arrangement. Nearly 30 per cent (0.7 million) benefited from an effective FBA and 2 per cent (<0.1 million) from an effective court arrangement.
- The drivers of the increase of the numbers of children benefitting from effective arrangements were the large number of statutory arrangements and an increase in these between Waves 3 and Wave 5 time points. These arrangements numbered over half of all arrangements and the effectiveness was 84 and 86 per cent in 2011-12 and 2013-14 respectively.

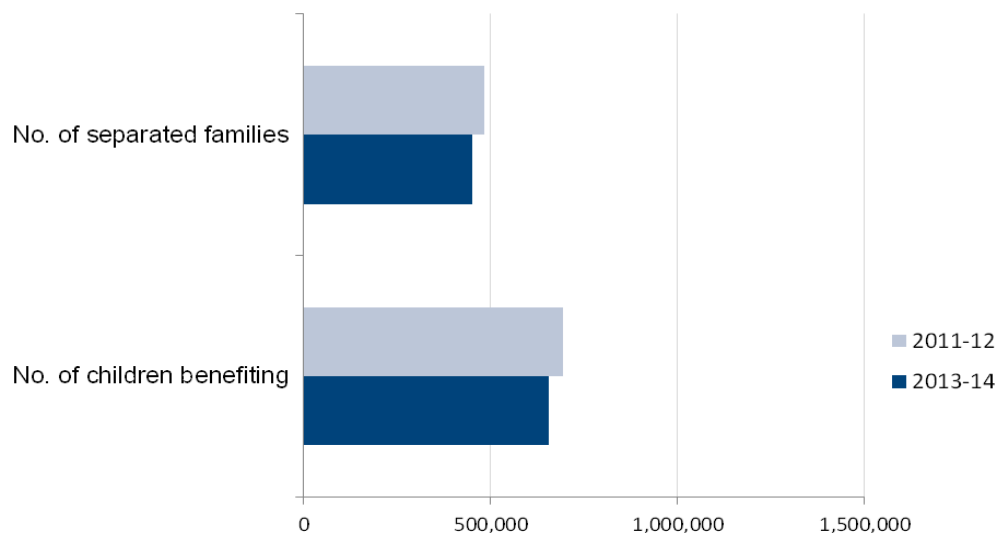


Family Based Arrangements - 2011-12 and 2013-14

Separated families and children benefiting from an FBA



Separated families and children benefiting from an effective FBA



The graphs on this page illustrate the changes in the stock of families with FBAs and children benefiting from them.

Separated families and children with a FBA

- In 2011-12 38 per cent of all separated families had a FBA and this remained at this proportion in 2013-14. The actual number of families with a FBA remains at 1 million in both 2011-12 and 2013-14.
- In 2011-12 39 per cent of all children benefiting from a child maintenance arrangement were from FBAs. This remained at 39 per cent in 2013-14. The actual numbers of children benefiting from FBAs remains at 1.4 million in 2011-12 and 2013-14.

Effective child maintenance arrangements

- In 2011-12 29 per cent of separated families with an effective arrangement have a family based arrangement. This amounted to 0.5 million separated families with effective FBA arrangements. By 2013-14 this percentage had reduced to 26 per cent – 0.5 million separated families with effective FBA arrangements.
- In 2011-12 30 per cent of children benefited from an effective FBA which reduced slightly to 27 per cent in 2013/14. The number of children benefiting from an effective FBA in 2011-12 and 2013-14 was 0.7 million.

It is important to note that these measurements are the stocks of FBAs at the point of time of the survey (2011-12 and 2013-14). To understand fully the potential changes from any policy impacts longitudinal analysis will need to be carried out as well.

About these statistics – Notes on the data

Charging

- On 30 June 2014 we started charging clients for making a new application to the 2012 Scheme and for any new enforcement activity. Then on 11 August we started charging new and existing 2012 Scheme clients collection fees for using the Collect & Pay service
- Charging clients for our services aims to encourage them to make an active choice about their child maintenance arrangements rather than automatically defaulting to the statutory service. Our ultimate goal is that only those clients who are unable to reach a family based arrangement or where the paying parent has failed to pay using Direct Pay are in the Collect & Pay service.

Undercounts /over counts

- Current DWP policy states that the eligible child maintenance population is children which are either under 16, or under 20 and in full time non-tertiary education. The child maintenance module for Wave 3 is asked of respondents when the eligible child is under 18 and the biological parent is not in the household. Therefore Wave 3 will undercount the population as it covers the years 2011-2013 so the survey will not fully reflect the latest policy change (which was introduced from 2012). Wave 5 is in line with current government policy.
- We can currently use Wave 3 and 5 data to estimate the financial part of the measurement of effectiveness of an FBA but there will be undercounting as there is not inclusion of both financial and ad-hoc arrangements.
- Waves 3 and 5 do not include measurement of how 'well' the FBA is working. There will therefore be an over count of effectiveness here. Wave 7 does include a measurement on how well the arrangement is working so going forward this shouldn't be a problem.

The definition of an effective arrangement for FBAs is:

- A regular financial arrangement where at least some of the agreed amount is always/usually received on time and the parent considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well; or
- An ad hoc arrangement where the parent considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well.

The use of CSA admin statistics

- CSA statistics are taken from the latest QSS CSA Statistics June 2016, published in August 2016. This is both collection service and maintenance direct cases from the 'legacy' data. Comparing the admin data to the survey shows an undercount for statutory cases which was also the case in the previous analysis in 2012. As before, admin data is used to adjust the counts for the CSA cases. Total live caseload is used for the number of cases. For Wave 5, the latest CMS 2012 data (published in July 2016) is also used to produce the total number of cases.
- Effectiveness for statutory arrangements is taken from how compliance is measured in the admin data. It is measured as the proportion of cases with a positive liability who are contributing towards this liability (positive outcome). There is a difference in how we measure effective family based

arrangements and statutory arrangements. We have kept to the published compliance measurement of statutory arrangements to be consistent with figures published by the Department.

- The measurement of whether a family based arrangement is effective is taken from survey answers and following the published definition from the Child Maintenance Reforms Evaluation Strategy. As with all surveys these are self reported and subjective.
- Due to these differences in measurement and data sources, the effectiveness of statutory and non statutory arrangements like FBAs should not be compared. The timing of the analysis includes CSA admin data from June 2012 and June 2014. These are primarily from the 93 and 2003 schemes and cover maintenance direct and collection service cases from the CSA. As part of the child maintenance reforms the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) was set up in December 2012. The CMS began a phased approach to opening and was handling all new maintenance cases from November 2013. Direct Pay and Collect and Pay replaced Maintenance Direct and Collection Service, and phase 2 of the scheme introduction was the gradual closure of the CSA through the case closure programme. This 2011-12 analysis is just from CSA admin data due to 2011-12 not being in the timeframe for CMS. For 2013-14 the CMS data included is the number of cases which are being managed on the 2012 statutory scheme as of June 2014. This is then added to the number of CSA cases at June 2014 to give a total figure. The CMS data only makes up a small percentage of the 2013-14 admin statistics which is a reflection of the case closure programme and scheme changes.
- The CSA admin data is used to adjust the undercount of the CSA data from USoc. This is applied to the data by reducing those with No Arrangements by the same amount as the undercount. This follows previous published methodology and assumes that there is no reason to believe that there is an undercount from the FBA or Court arrangements.

Comparisons of effectiveness between the different arrangements

- Due to the measurement of effectiveness of a statutory and non statutory (i.e. FBA) child maintenance arrangement being both from different sources and having differing measurement methods, the results cannot be directly compared.

Use of survey data

- It should be noted that survey data are self-reported and subjective. Therefore, survey participants might not be fully aware of their own Child maintenance arrangements leading to an undercounting of some type of arrangements. Similarly with regards effectiveness with the family based and court arrangement data the results will depend upon the answers the respondent has given. There is a degree of uncertainty around these results.

Where to find out more

The above is a summary of key points to consider, but full methodology of the analysis is available in our Background document.