



Corporate plan
2009/10-2011/12

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Foreword by the Chair

I am pleased to introduce the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission's corporate plan. It sets out the next stage of our programme of change and reform to deliver a very different child maintenance system for Great Britain. It also makes clear the scale of the challenge we will face.

Although nearly everyone agrees with the principle that separated parents have a responsibility to support their children financially, less than half of those separated families actually have arrangements where money is flowing for their children. Our new services are designed to help more parents meet their responsibilities.

By promoting financial responsibility, removing disincentives to comply by breaking the historical links between child maintenance and the benefits system, and supporting families in making arrangements by providing the information they need to help them navigate the complex range of issues they face, the Commission can start to address the scale of behaviour change required. For those parents who cannot, or choose not to collaborate, we will provide an increasingly efficient statutory maintenance service, with an enhanced enforcement regime to take even more effective action at the earliest opportunity against those parents who fail to meet their responsibilities.

But we will not be alone in delivering our vision for a future where it is the norm for separated parents to financially support their children. As a non-departmental public body, at arm's length from direct government control, we have the flexibility to work as we see fit with the public, voluntary and private sectors. We are already working collaboratively across

government to develop more holistic services for families and children. We are providing parents with information and support in the places they naturally visit and through intermediary and specialist advisory organisations they trust.

I am pleased to have worked with stakeholders in shaping a vision for the Commission that sets a clear direction for our work: 'Supporting separated families; securing children's futures'. Looking forward, we will continue working to join up government services for separated families and, in partnership with those representative groups outside the public sector, to develop and deliver a system of child maintenance that truly works for separated parents and, crucially, secures better futures for children.

This plan outlines a significant early stage of the journey to deliver our ambitious aims.

Janet Paraskeva

Chair of the Commission

Introduction

In February 2006, the Government announced a twin-track approach to the reform of child maintenance: a three-year Operational Improvement Plan to stabilise the performance of the Child Support Agency (CSA), alongside a longer-term redesign of the child maintenance system.

The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission was established in July 2008, charged with completing the Operational Improvement Plan and delivering the second phase of reform: the fundamental redesign of the child maintenance system.

The Commission has embarked on a significant journey of change with the primary objective of maximising the number of effective arrangements across the 2.6 million separated families in Great Britain. By combining data from the CSA with the best available data on private arrangements, the Commission knows that less than half of these currently have effective arrangements in place. The Commission therefore faces a substantial challenge.

In its first year, the Commission has introduced a number of important early improvements to the system, including:

- removing the compulsion that previously required parents on benefits with a child maintenance interest to use the CSA. These parents are also benefiting through an increased child maintenance disregard;

- launching the national Child Maintenance Options service to all parents; and
- taking over responsibility for the CSA and successfully completing year three of the Operational Improvement Plan.

This corporate plan sets out how the Commission will deliver its three core functions: promoting child maintenance to improve the attitudes and behaviours of separated parents to financially support their children; providing information and support through an enhanced Child Maintenance Options service; and providing an increasingly effective statutory maintenance service through the CSA and, from 2011, through a new statutory maintenance scheme (referred to in this plan as the future scheme).

The plan details the scale of the challenge that the Commission faces in making these changes: implementing services that address past failings in child maintenance; ensuring that parents meet their responsibilities; and ultimately securing the best outcomes for children at the best value for the taxpayer.

The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission

Currently more than a million parents in Great Britain do not fulfil their responsibilities to maintain their children financially. This can have damaging effects on children's lives.

The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission was established under the Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008 to end this culture and provide a fresh approach to child maintenance. The primary objective of the Commission is to maximise the number of effective child maintenance arrangements in place for those children who live apart from one or both of their parents. The 2008 Act was a direct response to the far-reaching review, led by Sir David Henshaw, which concluded that the existing arrangements were failing to deliver for children, parents and taxpayers.

With a new approach and new services, the Commission will encourage parents to take responsibility for maintaining their children, support them in putting their own arrangements in place or, through a statutory scheme with greater powers, used more effectively, help ensure that children get the financial support they need from both of their parents.

The Commission's vision

The Commission wants to create a future where parents who live apart from their children should expect, want and be able to make effective maintenance arrangements for their children, where payment becomes the norm and non-payment is no longer socially acceptable.

The Commission's vision, which has been developed with involvement from groups representing parents and separated families, is to support separated families in understanding the range of child maintenance options available and to help them navigate the issues they face in putting an effective arrangement in place; and therefore, in establishing an effective arrangement, the Commission can help secure children's futures by facilitating the financial support they need.

'Supporting separated families; securing children's futures.'

Specifically, the Commission wants to create a future where:

- society expects parents who live apart from their children to make effective arrangements for child maintenance;
- parents know how to access information and support when sorting out their child maintenance arrangements, and understand the choices available to them;
- parents agree between them an appropriate level of child maintenance that is paid in full and on time;

- parents can ask the Commission to make child maintenance arrangements for them, where they are unable to agree their own arrangements;
- non-resident parents accept and expect to meet their child maintenance responsibilities; and
- effective child maintenance arrangements help to reduce child poverty.

This plan outlines the first stage of the journey to deliver a system of child maintenance that works for parents and secures better futures for children. It sets out the scale of the challenge the Commission faces in delivering its ambitious aims and its programme of work to continue transforming the child maintenance system over the next three years.

The timeline for change

The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission was established in July 2008, with the primary objective of maximising the total number of effective maintenance arrangements, whether made privately, by court order or through the CSA.

To meet this primary objective the Commission will, through its three core functions:

1. promote financial responsibility;
2. inform parents about the different options available, guide them to the most appropriate for them and support them in making private arrangements; and

3. provide an efficient statutory maintenance service, with effective enforcement.

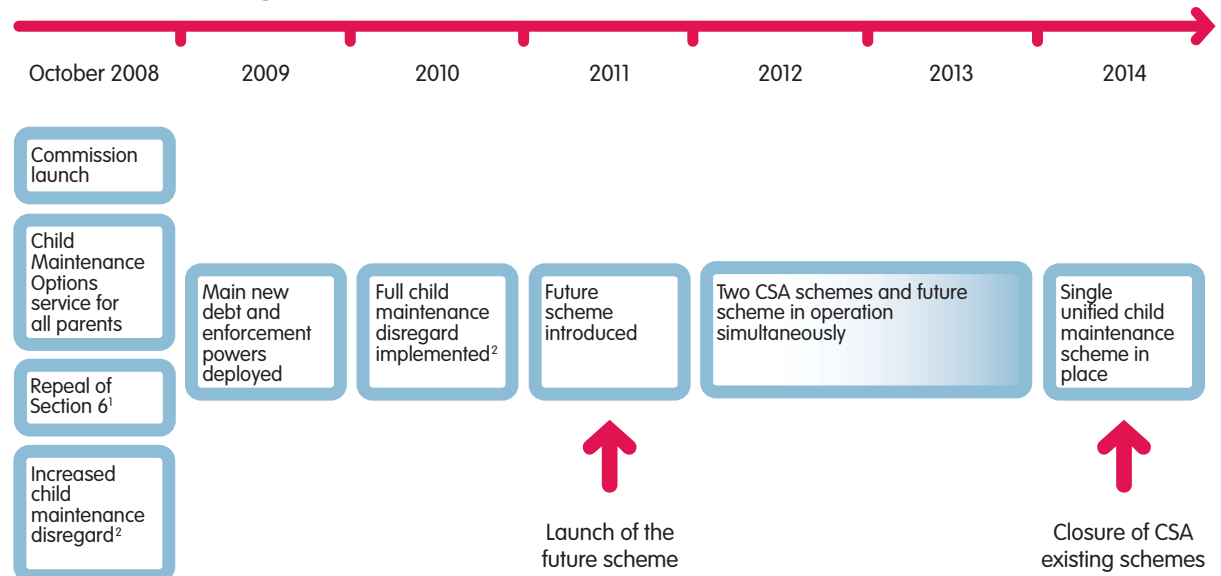
This is very different from the CSA, which has only one function: providing the statutory maintenance service. The Commission is seeking to ensure that *all* parents who live apart put in place effective arrangements to maintain their children, whether privately, through the courts or through the statutory service. The Commission is developing a new statutory service to replace the CSA from 2011.

The Commission has already introduced early reforms to begin disconnecting child maintenance from the benefits system, removing the compulsion on parents with care claiming benefits to apply to the CSA. Parents with care on benefit who choose to apply to the statutory scheme now keep more of the maintenance collected, through increased maintenance disregard when calculating their benefits.

It has launched a new service, Child Maintenance Options, to offer information and guidance and to support separating, separated and lone parents in making informed choices about maintenance arrangements.

In addition, the Commission took responsibility for the CSA, running the existing statutory maintenance service and successfully completing the Operational Improvement Plan.

Timeline for change



Over the next five years the Commission will move to the system set out in the 2008 Act.

In 2009/10, the Commission will: launch programmes to promote child maintenance and the financial responsibility that parents have for their children; further develop the information and support available through the Child Maintenance Options service; and begin to use new enforcement powers to help ensure that more parents meet their financial responsibilities.

From April 2010, parents claiming benefits will be able to keep all child maintenance they receive.

The Commission is developing the future scheme for calculating child maintenance which it will introduce in 2011. By 2014, it will have established arrangements on this scheme for all parents who have chosen to use the statutory service.

Maximising effective arrangements

Since the repeal in October 2008 of Section 6 of the Child Support Act 1991,

which removed the compulsion for parents with care claiming benefits to use the CSA, all parents can now decide which type of arrangement is best suited to their circumstances. In making their choice, it is important that parents understand the services, amounts and protections available to them from the statutory maintenance service and Child Maintenance Options. The Commission will launch new services, and continue to develop existing services, to inform, guide and support parents in choosing between the available options to establish an effective arrangement:

1. An effective private maintenance arrangement exists where both parents have agreed the form of the arrangement and are complying with it.
2. An effective statutory maintenance arrangement exists where the calculation under the scheme rules has produced an amount payable and this amount is being paid consistently.

¹ The repeal of Section 6 of the Child Support Act 1991 removed the compulsion for parents with care claiming benefits to use the CSA to arrange child maintenance.

² Since October 2008, parents with care on benefits choosing to use the CSA can keep more of the child maintenance paid, up to £20, before it affects their benefits. From 2010 they will be able to keep all child maintenance paid without it affecting their benefits.

The scale of the challenge – separated families in Great Britain

There are some 2.6 million separated families in Britain in which over 3 million children do not live with both their parents. Surveys show that less than half of these families have effective arrangements. Of those that do, around half have made them through the CSA and half privately or through the courts.

Around 300,000 families join the separated population each year through divorce or separation, or when children are born to single parents outside of a relationship. A similar number leave this group each year when children leave full-time education, reach the age of 19 or where parents reconcile.

Until July 2008, parents with care claiming benefits were compelled to apply to the statutory maintenance scheme. This was often unwelcome for the families concerned and placed

a heavy administrative burden on the CSA, which had to process a substantial number of claims each year from unwilling participants in the scheme. Following the ending of this compulsion, all parents now have the same options.

The removal of compulsion means that the number of cases in the statutory scheme is expected to fall over the next three years. Some of these families will make private arrangements and the Commission will encourage and support as many as possible to do so.

Commission activity to promote behaviour change, together with a more effective statutory maintenance service to establish arrangements, will lead to fewer families with arrangements that are not effective.

As the Commission delivers new services, and parents are encouraged and supported to make arrangements they can keep to, the total number of effective arrangements will increase.

Commission services – supporting the journey to an effective arrangement

Through its three core functions, the Commission will support parents on a six-step journey to an effective arrangement:



The Commission will actively promote child maintenance by raising parental awareness of the importance of taking responsibility and arranging maintenance, for their children.

The Commission will seek to understand and address the barriers that prevent parents putting arrangements in place

and further develop services to encourage them to overcome these barriers. The Child Maintenance Options service will inform separated parents of their options, guide them to the arrangement that is most suitable to their circumstances and then support them to establish effective arrangements.

Promoting child maintenance and financial responsibility

A core function of the Commission is to promote child maintenance and the financial responsibility that separated parents have for their children, whether or not they live with them.

Section 4 of the Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008 requires the Commission to 'take such steps as it thinks appropriate for the purpose of raising awareness among parents of the importance of (a) taking responsibility for the maintenance of their children, and (b) making appropriate arrangements for the maintenance of children who live apart from them'.

While research suggests that most people accept the principle that separated parents should financially maintain their children, many believe this principle does not apply in their case because of the circumstances of the parents and their relationship. While some separated families simply need an efficient statutory service with effective enforcement, others will need to be made aware of the increased choice and support now available to establish effective arrangements and to ensure financial stability for their children.

Current clients (those families that are already separated) should have a firm expectation that the non-resident parent pays maintenance. The parent with care of the child should expect to receive maintenance for the child.

Prospective clients (those who are entering the client group through separation, divorce or where children are born to lone parents) should know where help and information is available. They should recognise that the financial responsibility for their children remains after the end of the relationship.

Potential clients (all prospective parents, including children in education) should know where help and information is available, and should understand – and believe – that financial responsibility for children does not end, even if a relationship does.

Influencers (including trusted intermediary groups, immediate family and friends, other relatives and peer groups) will reinforce the message that it is right that children should be maintained.

A launch and establishment phase is planned for the next two years, to open up communication channels, promote financial responsibility and provide information on the services and help available. Once the Commission is firmly established and the future statutory scheme has been successfully introduced, communication and action can be more actively targeted at encouraging those who still haven't made maintenance arrangements to do so.

The Commission will conduct research with parents and those that influence them, to establish what factors encourage appropriate parental behaviour, and deliver marketing and communications campaigns to promote awareness, understanding and use of the Commission's services. It will prioritise its activity with separating or new lone parents, and families where financial support is not currently flowing.

The Commission will also work alongside other government departments and agencies and trusted intermediary and specialist advisory organisations that interact with families, children and separated parents, to promote the benefits of maintenance arrangements and to build awareness and demand for the help available through Child Maintenance Options.

Providing information and support

The 2008 Act requires the Commission to provide 'such information and guidance as it thinks appropriate for the purpose of helping to secure the existence of effective maintenance arrangements for children who live apart from one or both of their parents'.

The Child Maintenance Options service is designed to help parents understand the full range of options available for putting a child maintenance arrangement in place. It provides authoritative, impartial information and support to parents so that they are able to make informed choices about the child maintenance arrangements most suited to their circumstances. This includes information on other issues parents might face in making arrangements, such as housing or money worries, and the service will put people in touch with organisations that can provide more expert help. The service is delivered on the phone, through a national helpline; online via a website providing accessible and practical support in setting up and maintaining arrangements; and via a face-to-face service for those in most need of more personalised help and support.

The service was developed with input from stakeholders, including groups representing parents and separated families. It is available to all parents, whether or not they live with their children and regardless of their circumstances, as well as relatives, friends and advisers. The service can be used anonymously.

Initially run in prototype during early 2008, the Child Maintenance Options service was made available from July 2008 to those parents with care newly claiming benefits who were no longer compelled to use the CSA for arranging child maintenance. From October 2008, it became available for all.

The Commission will focus particularly on promoting the availability of Child Maintenance Options to separating and new lone parents and those that influence their behaviour, to foster collaboration and encourage the establishment of arrangements at the earliest opportunity.

The Commission will use research and evaluation programmes among current and potential customers to further enhance the information and service available, develop the process of referrals from other government organisations that interact with the majority of separating parents – such as Jobcentre Plus and HM Revenue and Customs – and continue developing its signposting relationships with trusted intermediary and specialist advisory organisations.

An efficient statutory maintenance service

For those parents who are unable or unwilling to make their own private arrangements, the Commission will provide an effective statutory child maintenance service to establish and maintain arrangements for them.

This service is currently provided by the CSA. In November 2008, the Commission took over responsibility from the Department for Work and Pensions for the CSA and the continued improvement of client service on its two existing statutory maintenance schemes. This is to ensure continuity of client service and continued service and performance improvement through the transition to the future scheme, which the Commission plans to introduce from 2011, the final year of this corporate plan.

The CSA has made substantial and wide-ranging improvements in performance and service under its three-year Operational Improvement Plan. However, significant productivity and efficiency challenges remain if the organisation is to deliver more outcomes for children in less favourable economic times, and where many parents will be exercising their option not to use the statutory scheme.

The Commission will focus on: continuing to improve CSA client service and performance; strengthening its enforcement powers, so that even fewer parents are able to avoid their responsibilities; and using the lessons learned from the Operational Improvement Plan to help inform the development of the future statutory scheme. Priorities will be to continue delivering improved client service and overall outcomes, on a declining intake and caseload; achieving substantial efficiency and productivity

gains by reducing the numbers of cases managed manually rather than on the computer system.

Around 1.6 million cases are currently managed by the CSA, which will continue to accept applications until 2011. Current schemes will continue to operate through the transition to the future scheme, until all cases on them are closed.

While the removal of any compulsion to use the statutory service for parents with care claiming benefits will mean a decline in the numbers on the statutory caseload in 2009/10, the Commission now has a wider responsibility encompassing both statutory and private arrangements. Within the statutory schemes, the overall proportion of children benefiting will increase. Increased maintenance collected or arranged on the smaller anticipated caseload, will be delivered by continued improvements in performance and additional action on non-compliant cases with ineffective or only partially effective arrangements.

During 2011, the last year covered by this plan, the Commission plans to introduce a new service to replace the CSA, including the future scheme for calculating child maintenance that will be simpler and quicker to deliver. The maintenance assessment process will be simplified to enable a faster, more accurate calculation that is easier to understand and administer.

Typically, only three pieces of information will be required to determine the liability of a working non-resident parent, and assessments will be based and updated on latest available tax-year information on gross income from HM Revenue and Customs, meaning that much of the process can be automated. Assessments will be reviewed annually unless income varies by 25% or more in any 12-month period.

From 2011, applications under the future scheme will be accepted and existing statutory schemes will begin to close. Clients will be invited to make a private arrangement if that is their preference, or will be supported in applying to the future scheme. Because of the volume of clients on the two existing schemes and the complexity of transition, the process is expected to take up to three years and be complete by 2014. At this time, the existing CSA schemes will close and all state-maintained maintenance arrangements will be on a single scheme.

The first year of this plan will be significant in laying appropriately robust foundations for future success, and preparing for the future scheme will be the Commission's biggest single investment over the coming few years. The contract to design and build the computer system for the future scheme was awarded in March 2009. In 2009/10, the Commission will agree the technical design and implementation plans for the future scheme and will begin work to build the scheme, including agreeing the framework for commissioning and delivering services in the most effective way.

Planned improvements in the assessment process, collections, enforcement, automation and making self-service processes available to clients, will deliver significant efficiencies and cost savings in the future.

The programme is ambitious, the timetable is challenging, and the Commission remains committed to implementing change only when it is confident it will deliver the outcomes required.

Effective enforcement

The Commission will continue working to use existing enforcement powers more effectively. In addition, new powers under the 2008 Act will be used across the current schemes, to improve compliance and ensure that more money flows for children.

The Commission is also seeking new legislative powers through the Welfare Reform Bill, which would enable the administrative removal of driving licences and passports, rather than having to apply to the courts, and it is working with credit reference agencies to share data and make a tangible link between compliance with child maintenance responsibilities and an individual's credit rating. The intention is for compliance with child maintenance arrangements to have a positive effect on credit references.

The Commission's longer-term aim is to ensure that the future scheme achieves high levels of compliance from the outset, through a mixture of more proactive case management, earlier intervention when arrangements appear to be breaking down and tougher enforcement for those who continue to avoid their responsibility to pay.

Residual arrears

The Commission will continue to pursue those arrears of maintenance that have built up where a non-resident parent has not fully met their obligations to pay.

Over the past 16 years, the CSA has collected and arranged over £8.6bn in child maintenance. Nonetheless, many non-resident parents have not paid everything that they owed and the accumulated balance of maintenance arrears on 1.1 million cases was £3.8bn at March 2009. Historical problems mean that this balance contains some estimates and not all of it is collectable.

Having taken over responsibility for the CSA, the Commission is assessing the collectability of the longstanding legacy of maintenance arrears. This assessment will be used to help inform the strategy, which is currently being developed, to deal with these arrears.

The Commission is currently exploring the most effective means to address residual arrears, and is considering targeting certain case segments with early use of the new enforcement powers. In addition, the Commission is planning how the recovery of any outstanding maintenance arrears from existing schemes could be co-ordinated with the collection of ongoing maintenance under the future scheme.

The Commission will: pursue more rigorous enforcement of regular maintenance payments and arrangements which repay outstanding arrears within two years; continue to use existing enforcement powers in the most effective way possible; introduce the new enforcement powers available under the 2008 Act; and continue to seek new powers where necessary.

Delivering the corporate plan

The Commission is responsible for maximising the number of effective maintenance arrangements for all separated families in Great Britain – not simply for those who choose to use the statutory maintenance scheme, but for all separated parents.

Changes in legislation that break the link between child maintenance and the benefits system will lead to a shift in the proportion of separated families who use the statutory service compared with those who make private arrangements. The Commission is responsible for supporting all these families – this is a significant change in focus and represents a new set of challenges.

Following the repeal of Section 6 of the Child Support Act 1991 in 2008, no parent is compelled to use the CSA and parents are now free to exercise their option not to come to (or leave) the statutory schemes. The long-term cost of providing the Commission's services depends on the number of parents choosing to use the statutory service, which carries a significant ongoing cost.

Promoting financial responsibility, encouraging and supporting the making of private arrangements where appropriate and delivering an effective and efficient future statutory maintenance service from 2011, will all contribute to delivering value for money for taxpayers.

The plan set out in this document assumes that funding will continue at broadly the current level. The Commission will consider what changes it would make to its plans should the level of funding change and the impact that this would have for children in separated families.

Over the period of this plan, the Commission will continue to develop existing services, design and deliver new services and develop a strategy to deal with arrears of maintenance. It will manage the introduction of the future statutory maintenance scheme and invite parents with CSA cases to transfer if they choose.

Commission focus

The Commission intends to deliver a substantial increase in effective maintenance arrangements and address residual arrears owed by non-resident parents, at lower ongoing cost by 2017/18. This will require a bold programme of change and investment in the shorter term.

The greatest influence at the earliest opportunity

The initial focus will be on separating and new lone parents, to encourage and support them in making the most appropriate arrangement.

This will ensure the greatest impact at the earliest opportunity. As over 90% of these parents will have had contact with the benefit or child tax credit systems, they will include those on lower incomes who most need urgent help. This approach will therefore contribute to reducing child poverty.

Improved efficiency, simpler processes, greater automation

Efficiencies in the future statutory maintenance service will ensure that the Commission can deliver more outcomes for children at better value for money for the taxpayer. These efficiencies are a major challenge for the Commission but will be the cumulative impact of:

- ongoing operational improvements to further improve current performance;
- simpler processes under the future scheme;
- automating and annually updating assessments;
- greater opportunities for client self-service; and
- a clean break from the legacy of past failings.

Uncertainty around longer-term costs and funding is one of the Commission's key challenges. Much of the organisation's cost is driven by the choices that parents make in deciding whether or not to make an application to the statutory scheme.

Funding until March 2011 is agreed under the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 settlement.

Commissioning services

The Commission is developing a commissioning strategy. This will set the principles of, and evaluation criteria for, the services it will commission to deliver its core functions, and the process and framework for managing their performance. The Commission is committed to delivering services in the most effective and efficient way.

The contract to design and build the computer system for the future scheme has been awarded and work to build the future service is under way. As part of the transition to the future scheme, the Commission is developing a framework to enable it to commission services most effectively. It will also enable the organisation to cope with the additional activity required to manage the transition from existing maintenance schemes to the future scheme, while maintaining and improving services to clients on the current schemes during the process.

Working with stakeholders

The Commission will not be alone in delivering its vision for a future where it is the norm for separated parents to financially support their children. It is already working collaboratively across Government to develop more holistic services for families and children, and to build messages around separated parents taking financial responsibility for their children.

The Commission has already engaged with stakeholders to shape its vision: 'Supporting separated parents; securing children's futures', and to develop the new Child Maintenance Options service so that it delivers the information and support that separated parents need to put in place effective maintenance arrangements.

The Commission will continue to work closely with a range of organisations that provide support for separated parents, families and children as well as other stakeholders, as it develops its approach to promoting financial responsibility and further develops its services to provide information and support. It is clear that if it is to guide parents and help them to navigate the complex range of issues they face on separation, then the Commission will have to join other government departments and voluntary sector organisations in providing a more holistic approach locally and nationally.

The Commission has started to provide information and support in the places parents naturally visit. It will do much more in the coming year to ensure parents and those who support them know and understand where to get the information and support they need in arriving at an effective maintenance arrangement. Understanding how to change the behaviours and attitudes of parents towards taking responsibility for the maintenance of their children will take time. However, helping children to understand this aspect of parenting and financial capability can begin now.

- Working with other government departments to develop more holistic services for families and children, nationally and locally.
- Placing Commission information in the places separated parents naturally visit, like Children's Centres and Citizens Advice Bureaux.
- Providing material for appropriate websites, covering parenting and separation issues.
- Working with the Department for Children, Schools and Families to investigate ways of promoting children's future responsibilities as the parents of tomorrow.

Measuring and managing performance

As a new organisation, the Commission will need to demonstrate clear progress towards meeting its statutory objectives and providing value for money for taxpayers.

Although the primary objective of the Commission is to maximise the number of effective maintenance arrangements for children who live apart from one or both of their parents, no reliable benchmark of current private arrangements exists. The Commission has therefore begun a programme of research, measurement and evaluation to provide robust measures and understand more about the attitudes, behaviours, service needs and expectations of its current and potential future clients.

Ministerial targets have been agreed for 2009/10 against which the performance of the CSA and Child Maintenance Options will be measured. Information about these targets is in the Commission's Business plan 2009/10, which is available at www.childmaintenance.org.

Longer-term targets, and proposals for evaluating and measuring the performance of the Commission, will be established during 2010 when the research programme is complete.

Commission costs

The forecast administration cost of the Commission in 2009/10 and 2010/11 is shown below, along with a comparison of actual spend in 2008/09.

Administration Cost (£million)	2008/09 ¹ Actual (unaudited)	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Forecast
Existing statutory service			
Investment	46	17	5
Delivery	523	490	432
New services			
Investment	40	70	105
Delivery	10 ²	36	40
TOTAL	£619m	£613m	£582m

1. Cost estimates for 2008/09 are subject to change. Audited accounts will be published later in 2009/10.
2. Represents operation for part of the year (the Commission was established in July 2008).

The Government reviews funding requirements in three-yearly spending review cycles. The current review period runs until March 2011. Forecast costs for 2011/12 are not included above as they will fall into the next spending review period, for which funding has not yet been agreed.

The existing statutory service cost is the cost of the schemes run by the CSA, which are due to close in 2014. The investment already made in the Operational Improvement Plan will continue to improve outcomes for clients on current statutory schemes until the introduction of the future scheme.

Delivery costs include a significant year-on-year reduction for running the statutory maintenance scheme, balanced by the cost of current clients applying to join the future scheme from 2011/12.

New services costs include marketing campaigns to promote child maintenance,

the Child Maintenance Options service and the future statutory maintenance service. New services investment costs cover:

- implementing the new legislation;
- developing, building and launching the future statutory maintenance scheme;
- recruiting and training the additional people needed during the transition period;
- setting up and managing the first residual arrears cases; and
- redesigning and restructuring the organisation and its processes.

The Commission is at the beginning of a long-term programme of change. Uncertainty around longer-term costs and funding is recognised as one of its key strategic risks. The table shows current best estimates of the resources required and how these will be distributed.

Corporate governance in the Commission

The Commission is governed by the Commission Board comprising the Chair, the Commissioner and a number of executive and non-executive directors who are responsible for developing the overall vision, strategy and policy of the Commission, as well as for the governance of the organisation.

The Commission Board

The Board sets the strategy and policy for the whole of the organisation. It is responsible for ensuring that effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management, governance and internal control. It is specifically responsible for establishing and taking forward the strategic aims of the Commission, consistent with its overall statutory objectives.

Chair of the Commission

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the Commission's policies and actions support the wider policies of the Secretary of State and that its affairs are conducted with probity.

In addition, the Chair has specific responsibility for ensuring that the Commission fulfils the functions set out in the 2008 Act; and an obligation to ensure that the work of the Board and its members is reviewed and is working effectively.

The Child Maintenance Commissioner

The Commissioner is the chief executive of the organisation responsible for the leadership, management and operation of the Commission.

The Commissioner is the Commission's Accounting Officer and is responsible: to Parliament for the Commission's accounts, internal controls and procedures; to the Department for corporate and business planning, and for informing them of progress in achieving agreed objectives and targets; for advising the Board on the discharge of its responsibilities; and for executing Board decisions.

Board committees

The Board governs the committees that ensure that the Commission runs with propriety, is effective in delivering public service and demonstrates good value for money for the taxpayer. These committees include a non-executive committee which governs the Commission's remuneration and audit committees.

The Executive Team

The Commission's Executive Team supports the Commissioner in discharging his responsibilities and is responsible for the executive management of the Commission.

The Commission's governance arrangements are covered in detail in the framework document and governance handbook, available at www.childmaintenance.org.

Status and Authority of the Commission

The Commission is established under Section 1 of the Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008 as a Crown non-departmental public body. This means that the Commission is not a government department (or part of one), and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arm's length from Ministers.

The Commission is sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions. This means that the Commission is funded through the Department and, ultimately, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is accountable to Parliament for the Commission's activities and performance. The Permanent Secretary of the Department for Work and Pensions, as the Department's Principal Accounting Officer, is responsible for ensuring that there is a high standard of financial management, both within the Department and in the non-departmental public bodies that it sponsors.

How to contact the Commission

Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission

The Commissioner
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission
PO Box 239
Holbeck
LS1 1EB

www.childmaintenance.org

Child Maintenance Options

National helpline: **0800 988 0988**

www.cmoptions.org

For impartial information and support on the range of options for making child maintenance arrangements.

Child Support Agency

National helpline: **08457 133 133**
(textphone **08457 138 924**).

www.csa.gov.uk

For information about existing child maintenance cases and the current statutory service.

