

27th January 2010

Coverage: Great Britain

Theme: Social and Welfare

## CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

### Introduction

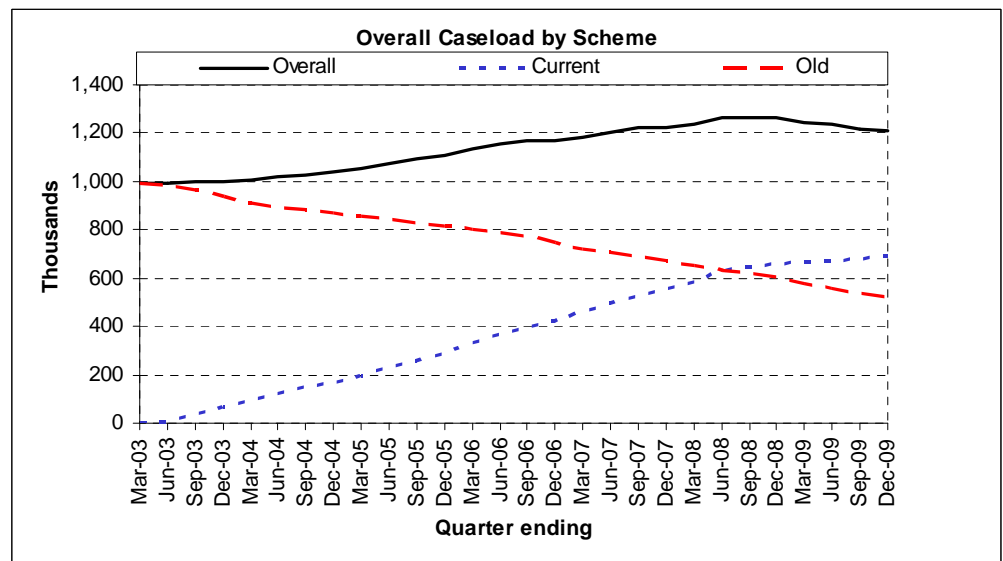
The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission was established in July 2008 and took over responsibility of the Child Support Agency functions, staff and estate on 1st November 2008.

The CSA is responsible for tracing non resident parents, working out how much maintenance they should pay and collecting and enforcing payments.

The figures presented are inclusive of clerical case performance.

### Main Findings

- At the end of December 2009, the CSA live and assessed caseload stood at 1.21 million.



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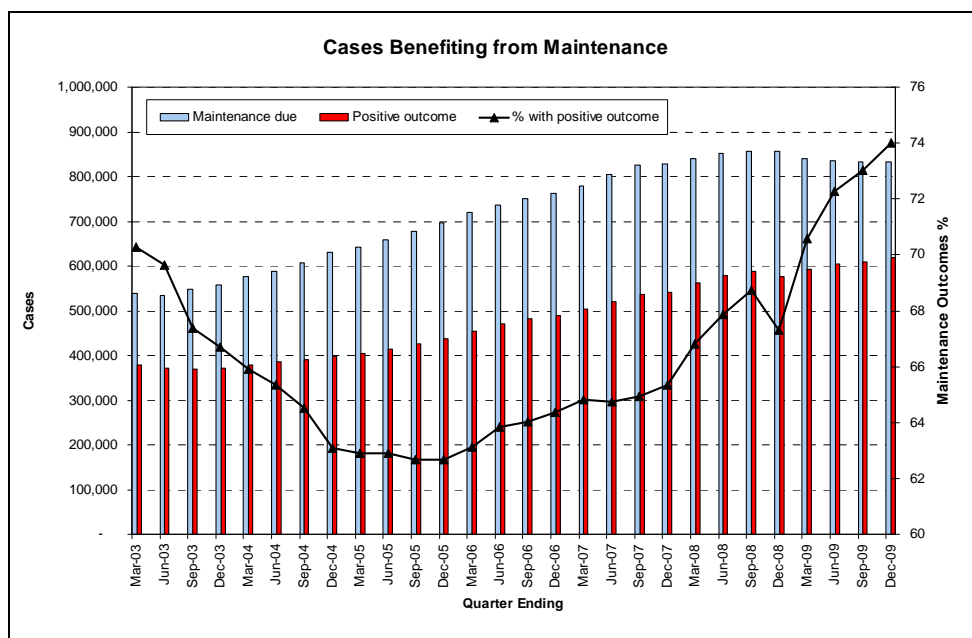
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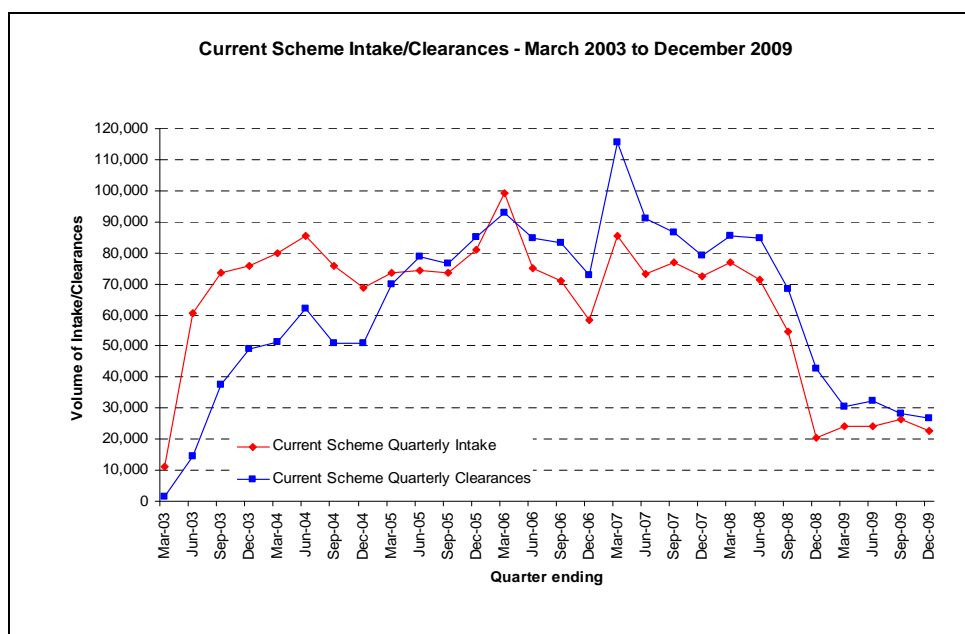
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- In the quarter ending December 2009, 74% of all cases in which maintenance was due had either received maintenance via the CSA collection service, or had a maintenance direct arrangement in place.
- In the three months to December 2009, maintenance had been collected or arranged by the CSA via the statutory maintenance service on behalf of 809,800 children.
- In the quarter to December 2009, the CSA collected or arranged £286m in child maintenance (regular and arrears), of which £37m was arrears. In the year to December 2009, the CSA collected or arranged £1,135m in child maintenance (regular and arrears), of which £150m was arrears.

**Next Publication:** 28th April 2010



- 88% of intake received in September 2009 was cleared within 12 weeks. This is an increase from 84%, 3 months earlier. 92% of intake received in July 2009 was cleared within 18 weeks. This is an increase from 90% 3 months earlier.
- The volume of uncleared current scheme applications has fallen by 6,300 since September 2009, and is currently at 25,500. This represents a fall of 20% since September 2009.



- Outstanding child maintenance arrears have decreased from £3,796m in September 2009 to £3,783m in December 2009<sup>1</sup>.
- At the end of December 2009, the average maintenance calculation was £21 per week (including zero calculations).
- In the nine months to December 2009, the Agency answered 99.0% of the telephone calls they received within 60 seconds. This is up from 94.5% in the nine months to December 2008.
- In December 2009, there were 8,600 staff employed by the Commission/Agency (measured on a full-time equivalent basis).

Latest statistical data available from <http://www.childmaintenance.org/en/publications/statistics.html>

<sup>1</sup> Outstanding Child maintenance arrears figures after March 2008 have not yet been audited and finalised.

- **Notes to Editors**

The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, established as a crown non-departmental public body under the Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008, is responsible for the child maintenance system in Great Britain.

The Commission assumed responsibility for the Child Support Agency (CSA) from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on 1st November 2008.

This publication, produced in conjunction with DWP Information Directorate, contains the most up-to-date tables and breakdowns on the CSA's two existing statutory child maintenance schemes.

The data covers the period both before and after the Commission assumed responsibility for the CSA on 1st November 2008. The data also covers the period both before and after the removal of the compulsion on parents with care who are claiming income based benefits to use the CSA to collect or arrange maintenance payments. The change, which came into force on 27th October 2008, affects CSA clients who can now choose to make private maintenance arrangements with the non resident parent.

After this date, some parents with care have opted to end their child support claim with CSA. This can be seen as a fall in overall caseload after October 2008.

- **Changes in this QSS**

#### **Annual Maintenance Outcomes and Arrears Distribution.**

On 5th June 2009, the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission launched an external consultation on proposals for revising the Quarterly Summary of Statistics (QSS) relating to the CSA, part of the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission. The closing date for responses was 28th August 2009. The consultation document can be viewed at <http://www.childmaintenance.org/en/pdf/Consultationresponse.pdf>.

An annual maintenance outcomes and an arrears distribution table are included in this publication as part of meeting the consultation outcomes.

#### **Live load**

As announced in the September 2009 QSS, it had been identified that methodology changes were required around the identification of certain types of case. Some were cases which have been cancelled and withdrawn from the CS2 system and are no longer classed as 'Live' cases. Others were cases which were not correctly identified as converted cases. Methodology changes have been included in this publication resulting in such cases being correctly classified. Due to the small nature of the change and the cost of implementing a back series revision, most historical data will not be revised. However, historical numbers for intake, clearances and closures have been revised.

#### **Maintenance Collected and Arranged**

Following a review of the process in dealing with manual payments and advanced functionality on the Agency's financial computer system, which is used to monitor receipts, maintenance collected and arranged figures from April 2009 to September 2009 have been restated in this publication. In the September 2009 publication, maintenance collected was understated by approximately £0.1m in the period from April 2009 to September 2009.

#### **CSCS Data Correction**

A small error has been identified relating to figures on cases held on the CSCS computer system for September 2009. This feeds into tables on old scheme performance and overall Agency performance. The affected tables have been footnoted accordingly and the error rectified.

#### **Time to clear**

As announced in the September 2009 QSS, the Time to Clear table now includes cases that have been cleared offline by way of a manual payment being set up. This has made a small change (less than one percentage point) to the time to clear table/ chart across all quarters.

#### **Enforcement Processes**

Following a review of the current process for recording collections and monitoring payments within Legal Enforcement a decision was made that to improve efficiency the manual monitoring and recording of collections would cease and a new automated process has been developed to monitor total collections received. Total collections received are not available from September 2009. The new automated process will be used in next quarter's publication.

The introduction of a new Legal Enforcement computer system announced last quarter means that source data to extract this information will in future be derived from a different IT system, now due to be delivered in early 2010.

- **Forthcoming revisions**

These revisions will take effect from the next publication of the QSS which will be released on 28th April 2010.

### **Enforcement Processes**

A new automated process will be used to record legal collections as detailed in the 'Changes in this QSS' section above.

### **Suspended CSCS**

It has been identified that a number of suspended cases administered on the CSCS computer system are included in the Agency liveload. These cases have been suspended for reasons that include death of a non resident parent, parent with care or qualifying child. A methodology change is required to treat these cases in the same way as cancelled/withdrawn cases held on the CS2 computer system therefore removing them from the liveload.

### **CSCS Uncleared**

It has been identified that cases administered on the CSCS computer system, currently reported as uncleared applications have actually had a maintenance assessment performed and should therefore be classified as a cleared application. A fix is required to correct these cases and will be implemented in the next publication. This will reduce old scheme uncleared applications by 80 cases.