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Coverage: Great Britain
Theme: Social and Welfare

CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF STATISTICS - (QSS) November 2002

The Child Support Agency Quarterly Summary of Statistics for November 2002 is published today.

The publication shows profiles of Non-resident Parents (NRPs) and Parents/Persons with Care (PWCs), amounts of maintenance assessments and compliance levels based on 'live' interim and fully assessed Great Britain cases on the Child Support Computer System (CSCS) at end-November 2002

The main findings are:

Caseloads

The number of cases with a Child Support Agency full maintenance assessment (FMA) increased by 3% between November 2001 and November 2002, to 1,048.3 million. The FMA caseload has risen consistently year-on-year since the CSA began in April 1993.

Compliance

Payment compliance continues to rise gradually. 76% of Non-resident Parents (NRPs) were partially or fully compliant in the quarter to November 2002, compared with 73% a year earlier and 72% in the quarter to November 2000.

(Compliance data excludes cases where payment is not made through the CSA collection services or where no maintenance was charged via the regular payment or arrears accounts during the quarter).

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

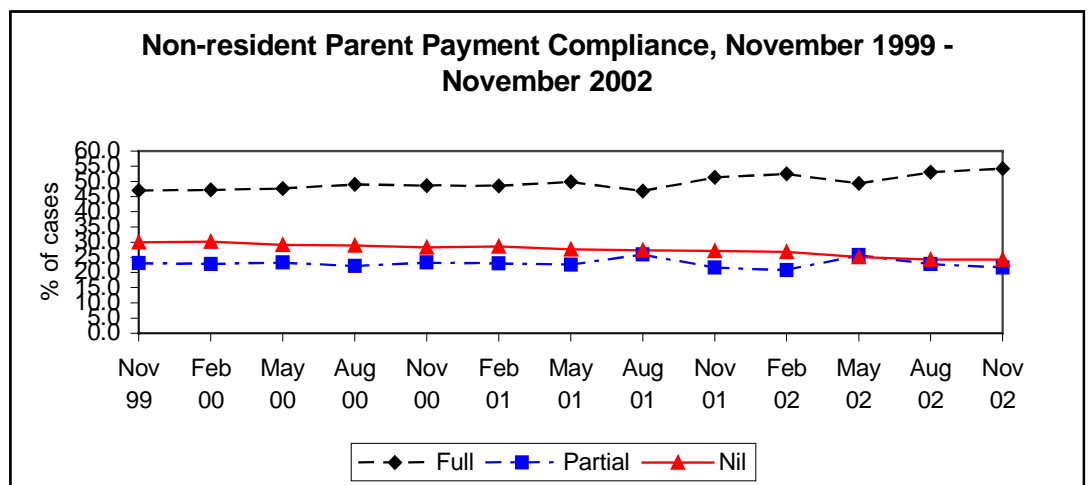
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Employment/Benefit Statuses

37% of PWCs with a FMA were also in receipt of Income-based Job Seekers Allowance, (IS/JSA(IB)), at August 2002, compared with 38% a year earlier. The proportion of PWCs receiving Working Families' Tax Credit (WFTC) has increased from 25% to 26% over the year. This reflects the continuing shift in PWC benefit statuses away from IS/JSA(IB) onto WFTC. 48% of NRPs with a FMA were employed at November 2002, with a further 5% self-employed. These percentages are virtually unchanged over the past three or four years. (Please note that NRP employment/benefit statuses are taken from the CSCS and are more representative of the situation at the point the case was taken-on rather than at the current time).

Maintenance Assessments

The average weekly maintenance assessment for all 'live' fully assessed cases rose from £20.81 to £21.17 during the period November 2001 to November 2002. However, this average figure disguises the fact that almost half of all NRPs have a zero FMA, due to the NRP being on income support, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance or having a weekly assessable income too low to be charged maintenance. NRPs with regular income from working as an employee had an average weekly full maintenance assessment of £39.20 at end-November 2002, compared with £23.09 for the self employed.

NOTES TO EDITORS

New Methodologies

- (a) From November 1998, a new, improved methodology for determining the benefit status of PWCs has been used. Full details of the new methodology and the need for the change are included in Appendix C, page 50. To aid comparisons a complete, consistent time series back to February 1998 is shown in table 4.2 (page 37).
- (b) From November 1998, a new, improved compliance methodology has been used to produce more stable and accurate compliance data. The change in methodology is fully explained in Appendix D, page 52. To aid comparisons a complete, consistent time series back to February 1998 is shown in tables 4.5 and 4.6 (page 39).
- (c) Following investigations into the over-estimation of Interim Maintenance Assessment (IMA) figures, we are now able to provide accurate IMA figures using a 100% scan of CSA work in hand totals taken on a monthly basis. Accurate IMA totals can be provided for May 2001 onwards, however, all IMA figures for February 2001 and earlier were calculated using the old methodology and are subject to over-estimation.

Background information

This publication contains data taken by Information and Analysis Directorate's Information Centre from scans of the Child Support Computer System. Extracts have been taken each quarter since October 1993. The first quarterly results were published in May 1996 in respect of the quarter ending November 1995. Some results from previous and subsequent extracts have also been published in the 1994-2000 editions of *Social Security Statistics*, the 2001 and 2002 editions of *Work and Pension Statistics* and in replies to Parliamentary Questions.

Until February 1995 the results were derived from a 1 per cent sample of records. In May 1995 this sample was replaced by a 5 per cent scan capturing one in twenty of the 'live' cases on the computer system. The change in method resulted in reduced processing time and improved quality of results.

All data within the tables have been grossed to the total 'live' and fully assessed CSA caseload for Great Britain at November 2002. The results are subject to the sampling error explained in Appendix A of the publication.

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