

26 April 2007
HSC -023

Coverage: Great Britain (unless otherwise stated)

Theme: Social and Welfare

CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

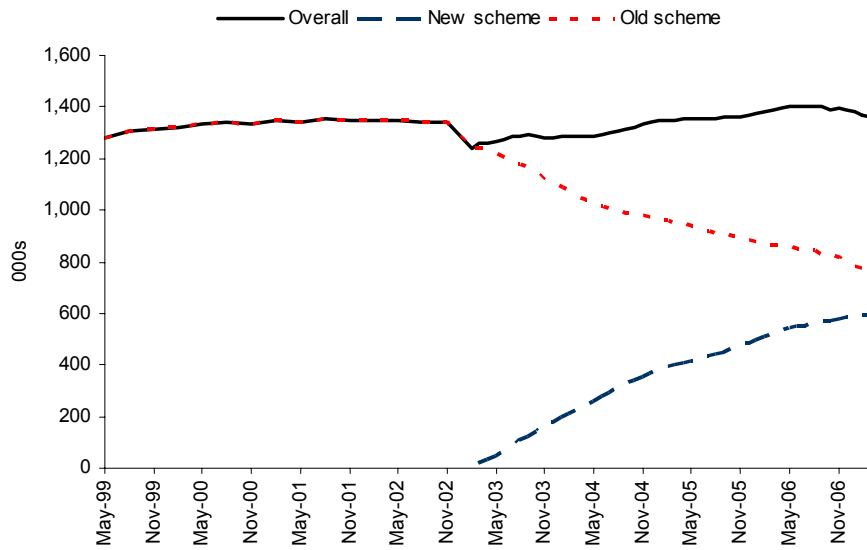
Introduction

The CSA is responsible for tracing Non-resident Parents, working out how much maintenance they should pay, and can collect and enforce payments.

Main Findings

- At the end of March 2007, the CSA caseload stood at 1.4 million, a decrease of 2% at the same point in the previous year.

Overall caseload by scheme



DWP Department for Work and Pensions

Issued by:
Information Directorate
Department for Work and Pensions

Telephone:
Press Office: 0207 238 0866
Public Enquiries: 0207 712 2171

Website:
www.dwp.gov.uk

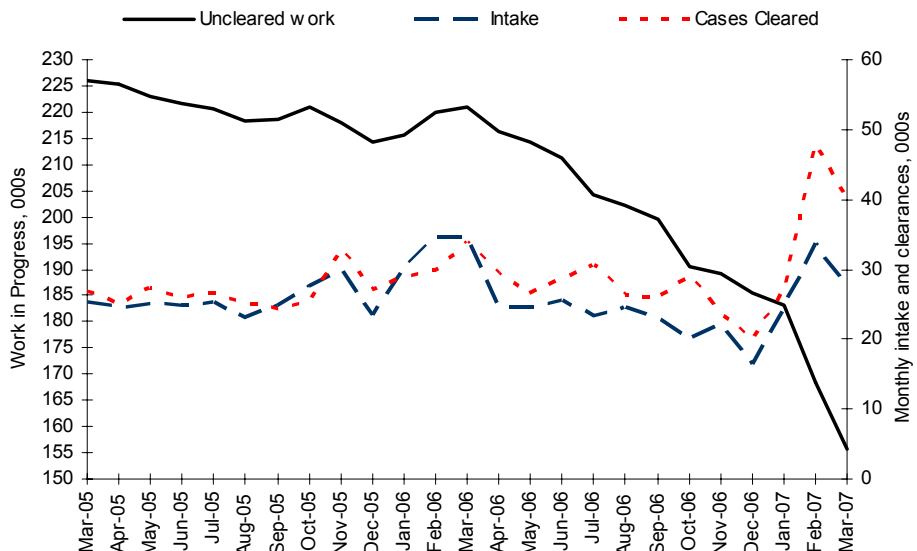
Statistician:
Stuart Grant
Information Directorate
Department for Work and Pensions
BP 5201
Benton Park View
Benton Park Road
Longbenton
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
NE98 1YX

Telephone: 0191 225 6048
Facsimile: 0191 225 3193
Email: stuart.grant@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

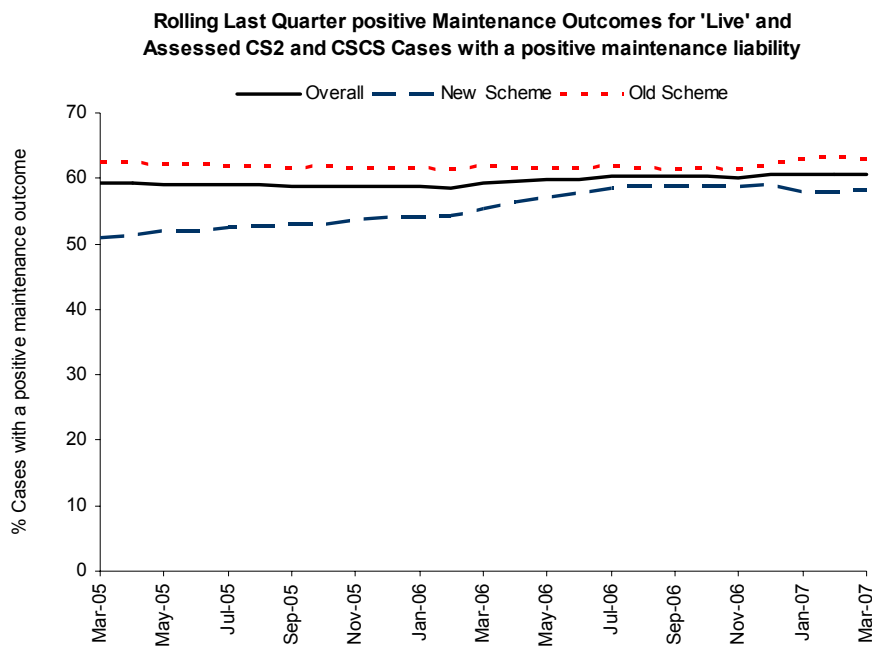
Next Publication: 25 July 2007

- At the end of March 2007, there were 195,000 uncleared applications across both schemes, a fall of 31% over the previous twelve months. The volume of uncleared new scheme applications has fallen by 30,000 since December 2006 and, at 156,000, is at its lowest since March 2004. This represents a fall of 29% since March 2006.

New scheme application intake, clearances and work on hand: monthly



- Of all new scheme applications received in December 2006, 61% had been cleared within 12 weeks, compared to 53% of applications received in December 2005. Of those applications received in September 2006, 78% had been cleared within 6 months, also up from 67% in September 2005. However, it should be noted that 14% of all new scheme applications received have yet to be cleared.
- The mean average processing time (from first contact with non-resident parent or parent with care until clearance of the application – i.e. when the case ceases to be uncleared work) for new scheme applications cleared in March 2007 was 228 days (33 weeks), with 50% cleared in 69 days (10 weeks) or less. The mean average age for uncleared cases was 548 days (78 weeks). A comprehensive definition of a clearance is provided within the QSS itself.
- In the quarter ending March 2007, 61% 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. This figure has been rising gradually since February 2006, but has been flat in recent months.



- In the quarter ending March 2007, on average, where maintenance had been paid via the collection service, the Agency had collected 90% of the amount due. Performance in this area has been broadly flat for the last year.
- At the end of the 2005/6 financial year (latest available), the total amount of outstanding money owed by non resident parents to parents with care stood at £3.5 billion, whilst this represented an increase of £242 million on 2004/5, the average monthly rate of increase has slowed from £23 million to £20 million.

- At the end of March 2007, the average new scheme maintenance calculation was £23 per week (including zero calculations), and that for old scheme assessments was £21.
- On average, in the 12 months ending March 2007, 79% of new scheme cases and 83% of old scheme cases were found to be accurate to the nearest penny, down from 81% and 84% respectively in the year ending March 2006.
- Between April 2006 and March 2007, the Agency had answered 97% of telephone calls available to staff to answer, with an average waiting time of 26 seconds, up from 91% answered with a waiting time of 59 seconds in the year ending March 2006.
- In February 2007, there were 11,400 staff employed by the CSA, with an average of 13.1 days sickness absence in the previous 12 months, up from 11.7 days in February 2006. The staff turnover rate in the year ending January 2007 was 16%, up from 15% a year earlier. This includes staff who left the Agency to move to a post within the DWP as well as those who left the Agency for posts outside the department.

Notes to Editors

Launched on 5 April 1993, the Child Support Agency (CSA) is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions, set up to implement the Child Support Act 1991 and operate the new child maintenance system in Great Britain (there is a separate but parallel agency for Northern Ireland). The CSA is responsible for tracing Non-resident Parents, working out how much maintenance they should pay, and can collect and enforce payments

Prior to 3 March 2003, CSA stored information on the Child Support Computer System (CSCS). Since the introduction of the new computer system (CS2) on that date, all new Child Support applications have been assessed under a new scheme on the new system

New Tables

This edition of the CSA Quarterly Summary of Statistics (QSS) contains a new table. This table relates to:

- The number of children who have maintenance collected or arranged by the agency. This relates to the Secretary of State target for 2007/08: By 31st March 2008 maintenance will be collected or arranged by the agency on behalf of 720,000 children.

In addition:

- Table 19.5, on maintenance collected and Maintenance Direct arranged, contains a new column on the estimated value of Maintenance Direct arrangements in place. This enables us to calculate a total amount collected or arranged by CSA.
- Since the last publication, some investigation has taken place into the best source for pre-assessed cases on the old computer system (CSCS). The results indicate that from January 2005 onwards, the QSS should be using a different data source. This has increased the number of pre-maintenance assessment cases by a maximum of 11 thousand since then.

We expected to deliver tables relating to family circumstances, changes of circumstances, compensation payments. Unfortunately, we have been unable to produce these in time for this publication. More information on family circumstances and changes of circumstances will be released in the next QSS. Information on compensation payments is currently not available.

The new tables can be found with the usual tables at: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/csa.asp>

Forthcoming changes

Since June 2006, CSA have been contracting out the collection of some arrears to debt collection agencies. For cases managed by debt collection agencies, the agreement to pay back the maintenance arrears and in particular the amount to be paid each month is between the debt collection agency and the non-resident parent. As such, the CSA no longer has the information to assess cash compliance for all cases. Whilst the total amount of debt is known, the monthly amount that debt collection agency non-resident parents are expected to pay is unknown. This affects the measurement of cash compliance (table 11) and a number of other tables (to a smaller degree). As a result, the arrears portion of the cash compliance series has been suspended. We are commissioning work to apply corrections to other series. In the meantime, these tables carry a footnote explaining the issue.

We have become aware that a small number of cases currently classed as "Assessed not charging" in Table 6 series may be more appropriately placed in other categories. We are investigating this and will issue revisions. These revisions will have an effect on other tables.

Similarly, a small number of cases have been deleted from the CS2 computer system and these deletions have not been feed through to these tables. This will be corrected in future tables.