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HSC-031

Coverage: Great Britain (unless otherwise stated)

Theme: Social and Welfare

## CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

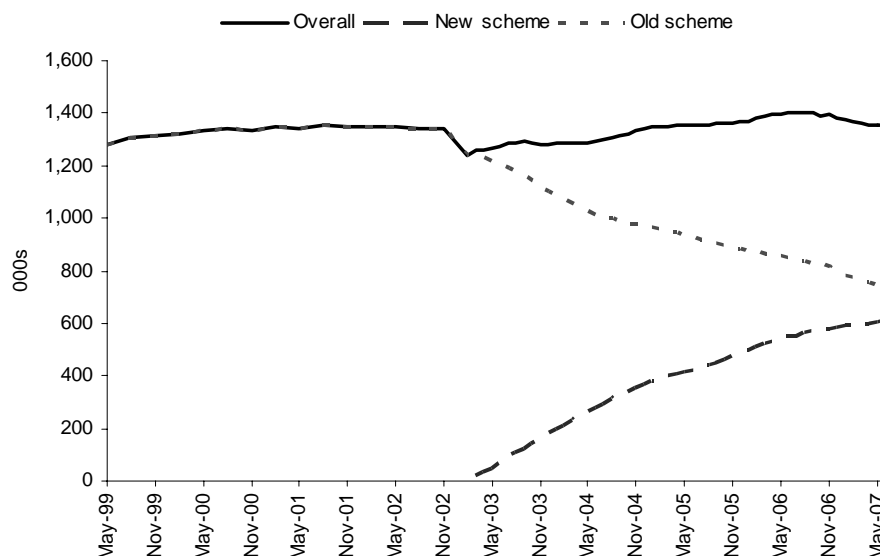
### Introduction

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 June 2007, the CSA caseload stood at 1.4 million, a decrease of 3% 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: 0203 267 5144

Website:  
[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

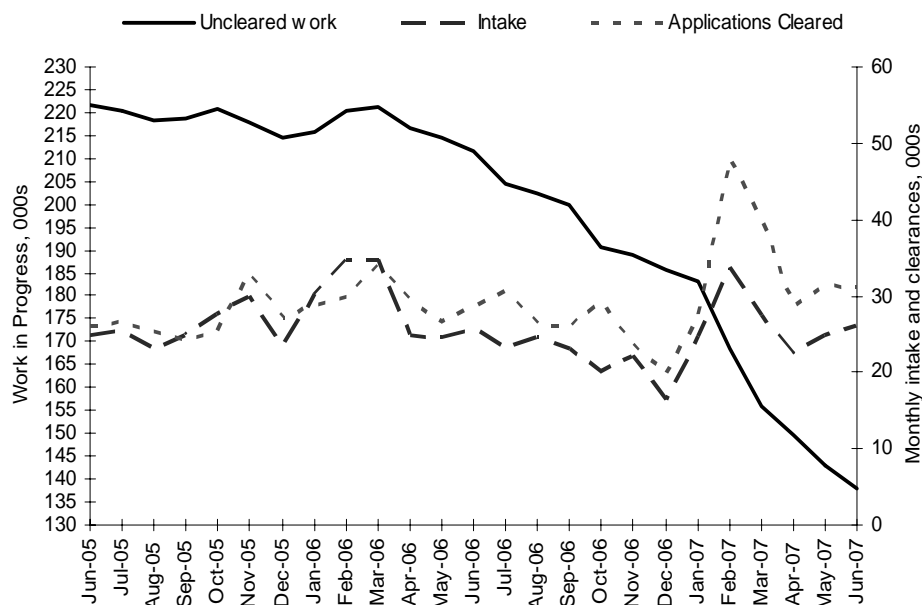
**Statistician:**  
Stuart Grant  
Information Directorate  
Department for Work and Pensions  
BP 5201  
Benton Park View  
Benton Park Road  
Longbenton  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
NE98 1YX

Telephone: 0191 225 6048  
Facsimile: 0191 225 3193  
Email: [stuart.grant@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.grant@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

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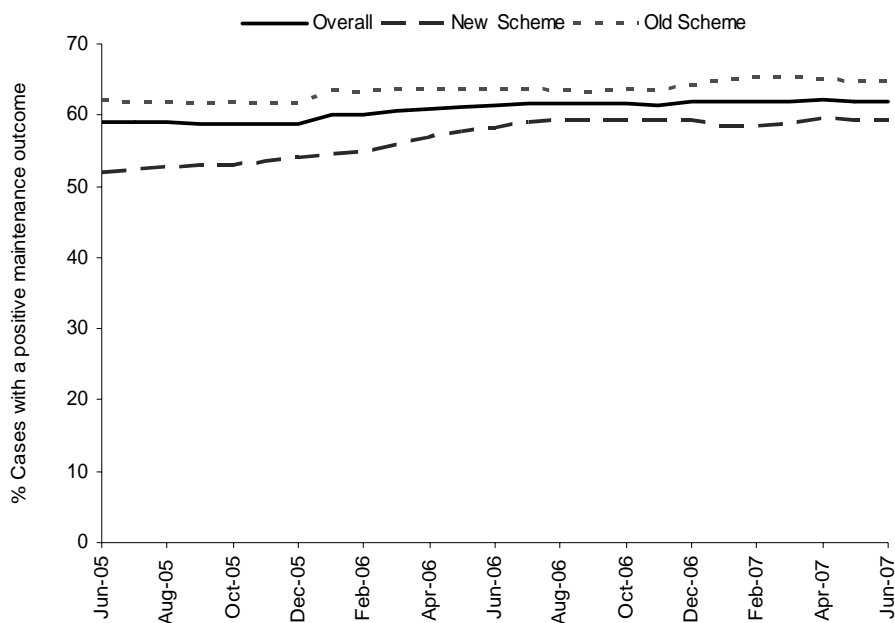
- At the end of June 2007, there were 171,000 uncleared applications across both schemes, a fall of 38% over the previous twelve months. The volume of uncleared new scheme applications has fallen by 18,000 since March 2007 and, at 138,000, is at its lowest since January 2004. This represents a fall of 35% since June 2006.

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



- Of all new scheme applications received in March 2007, 72% had been cleared within 12 weeks, compared to 53% of applications received in March 2006. Of those applications received in December 2006, 83% had been cleared within 6 months, up from 71% in December 2005. However, it should be noted that 11% of all new scheme applications received have yet to be cleared (a new scheme application is 'cleared' when a payment arrangement is established, case closed etc. 'Uncleared' applications may be at any stage in the application process, such as tracing the non-resident parent - only a minority will be completely unprocessed. A comprehensive definition of a clearance is provided within the QSS itself).
- The mean average processing time (from first contact with non-resident parent or parent with care until clearance of the application) for new scheme applications cleared in June 2007 was 232 days (33 weeks), with 50% cleared in 56 days (8 weeks) or less. The mean average age for uncleared cases was 585 days (84 weeks).
- In the quarter ending June 2007, 62% 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 not changed in recent months and currently equates to 486,000 cases.
- In the three months to June 2007, maintenance had been collected or arranged by the Agency on behalf of 660,000 children.

**Rolling Last Quarter positive Maintenance Outcomes for 'Live' and Assessed CS2 and CSCS Cases with a positive maintenance liability**



- In the quarter ending June 2007, on average, where maintenance had been paid via the collection service, the Agency had collected 88% of the amount due. Performance in this area has been broadly flat for the last year.
- In the year to June 2007, the Agency collected or arranged £906M in child maintenance (regular and arrears), of which £97M was arrears.

- 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 June 2007, the average new scheme maintenance calculation was £23 per week (including zero calculations), and that for old scheme assessments was £21.
- Between April 2007 and June 2007, the Agency had answered 98% of telephone calls available to staff to answer, with an average waiting time of 21 seconds, up from 97% answered with a waiting time of 26 seconds in the year ending March 2007.
- In May 2007, there were 11,000 staff employed by the CSA (measured on a full-time equivalent basis).

## 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

### Methodological changes

Last quarter we stated that we had become aware that some cases currently classed as "Assessed not charging" in Table 6 series may be more appropriately placed in other categories. We have now corrected this issue which has resulted in increases in maintenance outcomes and old scheme uncleared work.

Previously, a small number of cases that have been deleted from CS2 had been included in the QSS. Cases are deleted from CS2 when the case was generated in error e.g. duplicate cases or cases removed for data protection purposes. The majority of these cases (around 1,400) have now been removed although a very small number of deleted records will still be included.

These changes have been implemented back to January 2006 and the change in time series is indicated on those tables to which it applies. The remainder of the time series will be revised in next quarter's release.

### Additional statistics

New statistics have been included in table 19.5 to show the amount of arrears collected. This will allow fuller reporting of the new CSA target for 2007/08: "collect or arrange £970 million in child maintenance (including both regular and arrears) between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008; of which at least £120 million maintenance will be arrears".

Table 29 shows information on Changes of Circumstances dealt with by the Agency. These are being released as provisional National Statistics, subject to review. This information was requested in the external National Statistics consultation (June 2006). The table shows basic information on Changes of Circumstances: intake; clearances and uncleared work.

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

### Known Issues

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. These tables carry a footnote explaining the issue.

### Clerical Cases

The figures include the majority of the cases that have been (or are being) progressed as clerical cases. However, the tables reflect the position at the point the case became clerical.

Some work was undertaken to investigate the clerical caseload and it's interaction with CS2. If it were possible to account for all clerical cases in their correct position in the Agency, it was estimated that the number of cases at the pre-calculation stage would be slightly less than shown.

The outcome of cases now being managed clerically is not reflected in the Maintenance Outcomes and Compliance tables. The record of the case remains on CS2 but receipts will not be associated to the case on the system. Therefore, if the case was charging at the time it was removed from CS2 the case will now class as a negative outcome for the Agency. Outcomes for clerical cases which have never been on CS2 are also not reflected.

It is not currently possible to fully integrate the clerical caseload in these tables.