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HSE - 044

Coverage: Great Britain (unless otherwise stated)

Theme: Social and Welfare

CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

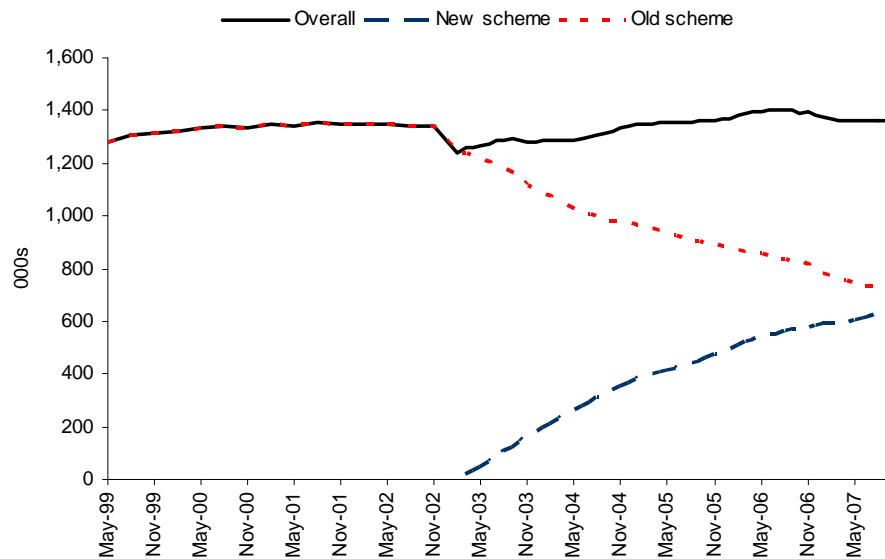
Introduction

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

- In the year to September 2007, the Agency collected or arranged £925M in child maintenance (regular and arrears), of which £106M was arrears.
- In the three months to September 2007, maintenance had been collected or arranged by the Agency on behalf of 674,000 children.
- At the end of September 2007, the CSA caseload stood at 1.4 million, a decrease of 3% at the same point in the previous year. The overall caseload fall is due to higher old scheme closures than intake to the new scheme.

Overall caseload by scheme



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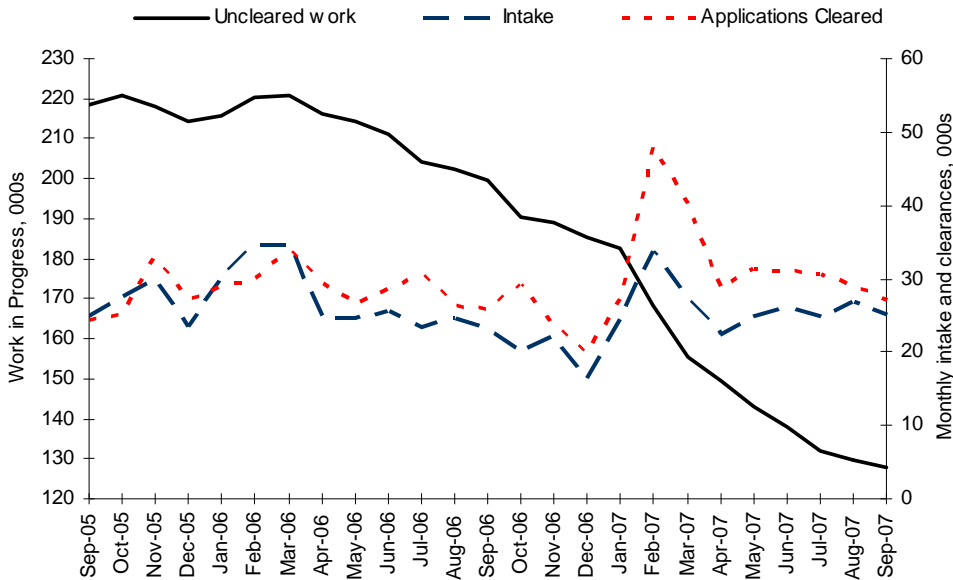
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- Of all new scheme applications received in June 2007, 74% had been cleared within 12 weeks, compared to 55% of applications received in June 2006. Of those applications received in March 2007, 87% had been cleared within 6 months, up from 73% in March 2006. At end September 2007, 10% of all new scheme applications received have yet to be cleared. In September 2006, 20% of all new scheme applications were uncleared. '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.
- Of those new scheme applications where the Agency has made a calculation and set up a collection schedule on which payments were expected from the non-resident parent, 85% of cases have made at least one payment to the parent with care.

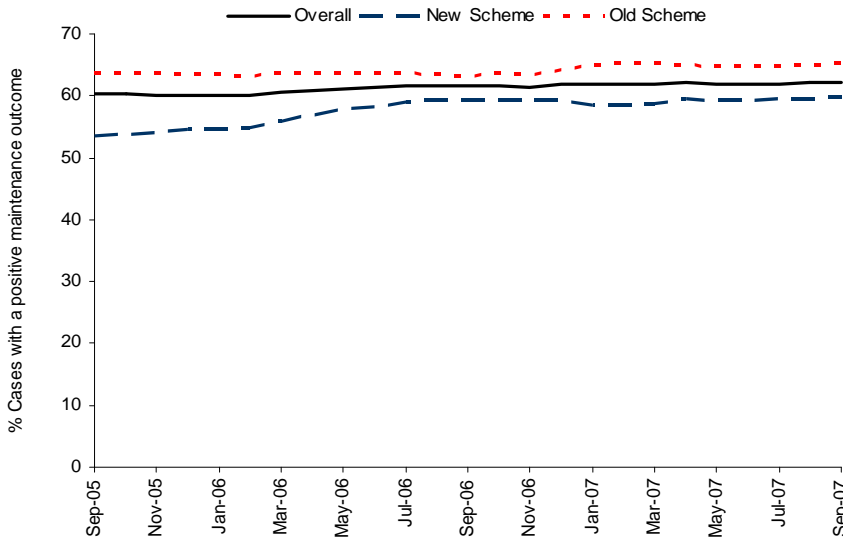
New scheme application intake, clearances and work on hand: monthly



- At the end of September 2007, there were 162,000 uncleared applications across both schemes, a fall of 37% over the previous twelve months. The volume of uncleared new scheme applications has fallen by 10,000 since June 2007 and, at 128,000, is at its lowest since December 2003. This represents a fall of 36% since September 2006.
- In the quarter ending September 2007, on average, where maintenance had been paid via the collection service, the Agency had collected 87% 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.

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



- In the quarter ending September 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 498,000 cases.
- At the end of September 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 August 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 August 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

Previously 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 now been implemented back to March 2003 and the change in time series is indicated on those tables to which it applies.

Additional statistics

Table 29 shows information on Changes of Circumstances dealt with by the Agency. These are being released as provisional National Statistics, subject to comment and review. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.

Since last quarter, changes of circumstances relating to closed cases have been removed; where a change notification splits in to more than one work item, all work items are now included; the column to show what proportion of changes of circumstances affect the collection schedule has been added.

Further comments are welcome.

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.