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HSC-017

Coverage: Great Britain (unless otherwise stated)

Theme: Social and Welfare

CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

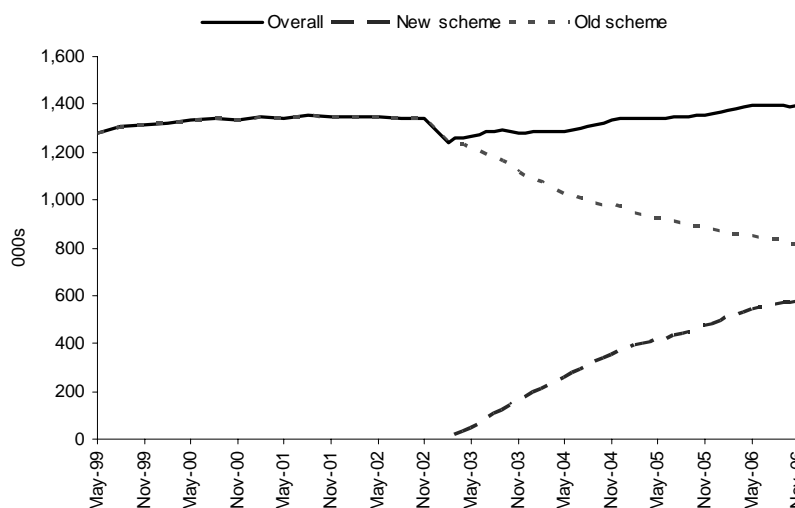
Introduction

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

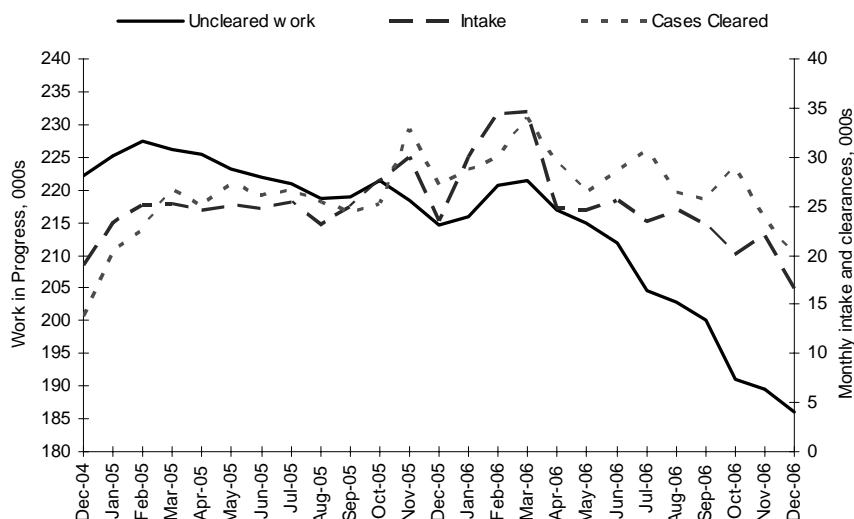
- At the end of December 2006, the CSA caseload stood at 1.4 million, an increase of 2% at the same point in the previous year. However, since the end of September, the total number of cases has been falling slightly.

Overall caseload by scheme



- At the end of December 2006, there were 238,000 uncleared applications across both schemes, a fall of 12% over the previous twelve months. The volume of uncleared new scheme applications has fallen by 14,000 since September 2006 and, at 186,000, is at its lowest since June 2004. This represents a fall of 16% since March 2006.

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



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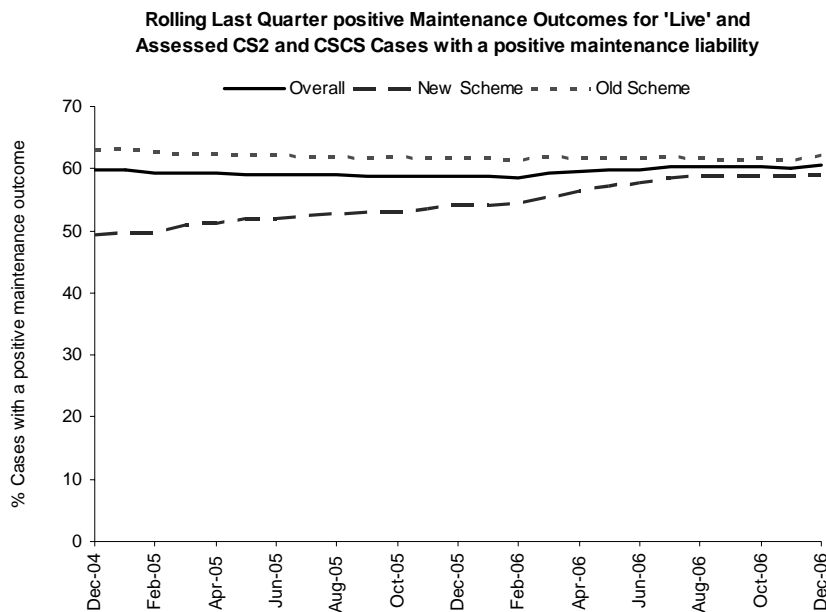
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- Of all new scheme applications received in September 2006, 55% had been cleared within 12 weeks, compared to 49% of applications received in September 2005. Of those applications received in June 2006, 74% had been cleared within 6 months, also up from 64% in June 2005. However, it should be noted that 17% 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) for new scheme applications cleared in December 2006 was 255 days (36 weeks), with 50% cleared in 95 days (14 weeks) or less. The mean average age for uncleared cases was 531 days (76 weeks). A comprehensive definition of a clearance is provided within the QSS itself.
- In the quarter ending December 2006, 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. Whilst old scheme performance has remained broadly flat, at 62%, since March 2005, that for new scheme has increased steadily from 51% to 59% over the same period.



- In the quarter ending December 2006, 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.
- At the end of the 2005/6 financial year, 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 December 2006, 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 December 2006, 81% of new scheme cases and 84% of old scheme cases were found to be accurate to the nearest penny, up from 79% and 79% respectively in the year ending December 2005.
- Between April 2006 and December 2006, the Agency had answered 97% of telephone calls available to staff to answer, with an average waiting time of 27 seconds, up from 91% answered with a waiting time of 59 seconds in the year ending March 2006.
- In November 2006, there were 11,600 staff employed by the CSA, with an average of 12.3 days sickness absence in the previous 12 months, down from 13.0 days in November 2005. The staff turnover rate in the year ending October 2006 was 15%, down from 16% 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 number of new tables. These tables relate to:

- Client service standard 2 which states that where child maintenance is being collected, the aim is to make a first payment to the parent with care within six weeks of making the initial payment arrangements with the non-resident parent (table 2.6)
- New scheme compliance levels and maintenance outcomes split by Local Authority, Parliamentary Constituency and region (table S3a, S3b, S4a, S4b – geographical tables are now issued in a separate supplement)
- A table showing the amount of maintenance collected by CSA since 1993/94 (table 19.5)
- In the weeks following the release of this QSS, we plan to issue Local Authority and Parliamentary Constituency tables of uncleared work, compliance and maintenance outcomes on a monthly basis, back to March 2003. These tables will be available at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/csa.asp>

We expected to deliver tables relating to family circumstances, changes of circumstances, compensation payments and NRP income bands in this QSS. Unfortunately, we have been unable to produce these in time for this publication We will aim to include NRP income bands in the June 2007 QSS (for release in July); and the remainder in the March 2007 QSS, due for release in April.

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

Changes to existing tables

An error has been discovered in the way table 13.1 (Percentage of Parents With Care on Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance (income based) in Receipt of Maintenance) has been produced in previous issues of the CSA Quarterly Summary of Statistics. This table has been removed from the publication, pending a full investigation. We are working to ensure a complete corrected series is produced and reissued on 8 February. Please accept our apologies

Since June 2006, CSA have been contracting out the collection of some debt to debt collection agencies. For cases on the old computer system, this process is accompanied by a charge equal to the total amount of debt. For both computer systems, it is unclear how monies paid through debt collection agencies are applied to the system. As a result, it is not currently possible to continue a robust time series for table 11 (cash compliance). We will attempt to correct this for the next issue of these tables. In the meantime, historical figures are reproduced in this issue of the QSS.