

Section 13 - Child Support Agency

Introduced 5 April 1993

The Child Support Agency (CSA) was launched on 5 April 1993. It is an executive agency of the Department for Social Development, formerly the Department of Social Security, set up to implement the Child Support Act 1991 and operate the new child maintenance system in Northern Ireland (there is a separate but parallel agency for Great Britain).

Parents who live apart from their children should pay maintenance towards their keep. The CSA is responsible for tracing Non-resident Parents, working out how much maintenance they should pay, and can collect and enforce payments.

The CSA main clients are:

Parents with Care

These are parents who live with their children, but who do not live with the child's other parent. The parent with care may have a new partner, but may still claim maintenance for their children from the other parent.

Persons with Care

These are people who look after children who are not their own, and at least one of the children's parents is alive and living elsewhere.

Non-resident Parents

These are parents who live apart from their children, but continue to be financially responsible for them and need to know how much they should contribute to their children's maintenance.

Applicants to the agency give their details on a Maintenance Application Form. Non-resident Parents fill in a Maintenance Enquiry Form.

On receipt of full details from the Parent/Person with Care and Non-resident Parent a full maintenance assessment is carried out.

Where full details are not provided by the Non-resident Parent the Agency may make an interim maintenance assessment based on the available facts.

The amounts of interim maintenance assessments are generally higher than full maintenance assessments.

Source

Tables 1 to 6 are based on a 100% scan on the Child Support Computer System at 31 May 2001. Figures for these tables relate to assessed Northern Ireland cases.

Abbreviations

CSCS Child Support Computer System

FMA Full Maintenance Assessment

IMA Interim Maintenance Assessment

NRP Non-resident Parent

PWC Parent/Person with Care

Summary

Between August 2000 and August 2001 the CSA liveload has increased by 1,739 (5%) and now stands at 34,954.

Of all full assessment cases 95% of the Parent/Persons with Care are female, and consequently 95% of the Non-resident Parents are male.

Over 44% of NRPs and PWCs are between the ages of 30 and 39 years, with an average age of 37.0 years for NRps and 35.0 years for PWCs.

For PWCs, 62% are in receipt of Income Support and 26% are in receipt of WFTC/DPTC. For the NRPs, 39% have an earned income, 23% are in receipt of Income Support and the remaining 38% have other sources of income, mostly other benefits.

The mean full maintenance assessment for all NRPs is £13.96 per week, with the median equal to zero. The mean full maintenance assessment for NRPs with regular income from employment, as an employee is £34.37 per week, with a median of £31.16, compared with £20.39 for the self-employed, with a median of £5.21. The mean maintenance assessment for NRPs with an interim maintenance assessment is £2.98 per week, with a median of £102.88.

**Table 13.1 Total number of live and assessed cases on the Child Support Computer System:
August 1998 - August 2001**

Month	Total	Full	Interim
August 1998	25,716	24,274	1,442
November 1998	26,829	25,405	1,424
February 1999	28,068	26,631	1,437
May 1999	29,110	27,619	1,491
August 1999	29,896	28,397	1,499
November 1999	30,871	29,364	1,507
February 2000	31,745	30,178	1,567
May 2000	32,504	30,940	1,564
August 2000	33,215	31,630	1,585
November 2000	33,725	32,276	1,449
February 2001	34,186	32,793	1,393
May 2001	34,459	33,084	1,375
August 2001	34,954	33,590	1,364

**Table 13.2 Gender of Non-resident Parent and Parent/Person with Care
Full assessments: August 2001**

	Non-resident parent		Parent/Person with care	
		%		%
Total	33,590	100%	33,590	100%
Male	31,943	95%	1,628	5%
Female	1,647	5%	31,962	95%

Table 13.3 Age of Non-resident Parent by age of Parent/Person with Care
Full assessments: August 2001

Parent/Person with Care	Non-resident Parent									
	Total	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55 & over
Total	33,590	163	1,731	4,438	7,210	7,811	6,155	3,507	1,737	838
Under 20	410	114	239	42	10	5	0	0	0	0
20-24	3,074	46	1216	1288	397	93	22	9	2	1
25-29	5,539	2	230	2406	2159	561	137	30	11	3
30-34	7,451	0	34	559	3537	2515	595	145	43	23
35-39	7,455	0	11	107	892	3660	2167	426	138	54
40-44	5,374	1	1	26	167	795	2606	1382	296	100
45-49	2,726	0	0	6	37	139	517	1245	621	161
50-54	1,137	0	0	2	7	24	83	232	532	257
55 & over	424	0	0	2	4	19	28	38	94	239
Average Age of :										
Non-resident Parent	37.0 years									
Parent/Person with Care	35.0 years									

Table 13.4 Benefit Status of Parent/Person with Care and Non-resident Parent
Full assessments: August 2001

Parent/Person With Care	Non-resident Parent							
	Total	In Employment		Income Support	JSA (IB)	JSA (Cont)	Incapac/ Disabled	Other
Total	33,590	12,016	1,182	7,796	4,774	1,068	1,872	4,882
Income Support	20,850	5,941	615	5,882	3,576	659	1,216	2,961
WFTC/DPTC	8,747	3,978	375	1,458	939	286	467	1,244
Others	3,993	2,097	192	456	259	123	189	677

Table 5 Maintenance assessment by Non-resident Parent's employment status/benefit type, All assessments: May 2001

Maintenance (£ per week)	Non-resident Parents								IMAs Total
	FMAs							Other	
	Total	In Employment Employee	Self Emp	Income Support	JSA (IB)	JSA (Cont)	Incapac/ Disabled		
Total	33,590	12,016	1,182	7,796	4,774	1,068	1,872	4,882	1,364
£0	20,030	1,439	258	7,523	4,618	496	1,720	3,976	170
£0.01-£5.40	3,044	1,370	345	235	118	512	24	440	2
£5.41-£9.99	561	453	55	4	4	4	18	23	1
£10.00-£19.99	1,453	1,202	115	5	8	14	25	84	1
£20.00-£29.99	1,618	1,386	100	6	8	12	24	82	3
£30.00-£39.99	1,543	1,356	80	7	7	9	25	59	31
£40.00-£49.99	1,556	1,381	62	7	5	8	17	76	75
£50.00-£59.99	1,308	1,176	51	4	1	6	10	60	63
£60.00-£69.99	1,039	940	44	3	4	4	3	41	49
£70.00-£79.99	638	581	32	-	-	2	3	20	61
£80.00-£89.99	340	308	16	2	-	-	-	14	39
£90.00-£99.99	201	190	7	-	-	-	-	4	131
£100.00-£109.99	106	95	7	-	-	1	2	1	194
£110.00-£119.99	66	61	4	-	-	-	-	1	156
£120 & over	87	78	6	-	1	-	1	1	388
Average maintenance	£13.96	£34.37	£20.39	£0.26	£0.35	£4.10	£2.23	£4.01	£92.98

NRPs on Income Support in August 2001 pay either zero or £5.40 per week.

The small number of IS cases where the maintenance assessment is greater than £5.40 are normally suspended cases where the CSA is investigating the current status of the NRP.