

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 28 February 2002. 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 February 2001 and February 2002 the CSA liveload has increased by 1,633 (5%) and now stands at 35,819.

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 43% of PWCs are between the ages of 30 and 39 years, with an average age of 37.2 years for NRPs and 35.2 years for PWCs.

For PWCs, 58% are in receipt of Income Support and 28% are in receipt of WFTC/DPTC. For the NRPs, 39% have an earned income, 25% are in receipt of Income Support and the remaining 36% have other sources of income, mostly other benefits.

The mean full maintenance assessment for all NRPs is £14.16 per week, with the median equal to zero. The mean full maintenance assessment for NRPs with regular income from employment, as an employee is £34.80 per week, with a median of £31.77, compared with £20.17 for the self-employed, with a median of £5.10. The mean maintenance assessment for NRPs with an interim maintenance assessment is £93.98 per week, with a median of £103.58.

Table 13.1 Total number of live and assessed cases on the Child Support Computer System: February 1999 - February 2002

Month	Total	Full	Interim
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
November 2001	35,401	34,068	1,333
February 2002	35,819	34,526	1,293

**Table 13.2 Gender of Non-resident Parent and Parent/Person with Care
Full assessments: February 2002**

	Non-resident parent		Parent/Person with care	
		%		%
Total	34,526	100%	34,526	100%
Male	32,786	95%	1,717	5%
Female	1,740	5%	32,809	95%

**Table 13.3 Age of Non-resident Parent by age of Parent/Person with Care
Full assessments: February 2002**

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	34,526	175	1,848	4,392	7,196	8,078	6,417	3,714	1,766	940
Under 20	455	115	276	50	10	3	1	0	0	0
20-24	3,145	54	1,283	1,255	405	117	22	6	2	1
25-29	5,569	3	240	2,388	2,169	573	147	33	13	3
30-34	7,492	0	38	556	3,512	2,550	625	146	46	19
35-39	7,639	2	9	108	855	3,811	2,217	448	122	67
40-44	5,654	1	2	23	190	831	2,729	1,465	305	108
45-49	2,917	0	0	8	44	146	565	1,313	677	164
50-54	1,184	0	0	2	8	25	87	254	501	307
55 & over	471	0	0	2	3	22	24	49	100	271
Average Age of :										
Non-resident Parent	37.2 years									
Parent/Person with Care	35.2 years									

**Table 13.4 Benefit Status of Parent/Person with Care and Non-resident Parent
Full assessments: February 2002**

Parent/Person With Care	Non-resident Parent							
	Total	In Employment		Income Support	JSA (IB)	JSA (Cont)	Incapac/ Disabled	Other
Total	34,526	12,387	1,222	8,552	4,949	1,074	1,765	4,577
Income Support	20,065	5,600	580	6,080	3,518	584	1,094	2,609
WFTC/DPTC	9,634	4,415	421	1,720	1,064	326	447	1,241
Others	4,827	2,372	221	752	367	164	224	727

Table 13.5 Maintenance assessment by Non-resident Parent's employment status/benefit type, All assessments: February 2002

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	34,526	12,387	1,222	8,552	4,949	1,074	1,765	4,577	1,293
£0	20,690	1,503	272	8,292	4,801	485	1,612	3,725	149
£0.01-£5.40	2,934	1,326	359	214	112	518	25	380	1
£5.41-£9.99	568	454	59	6	2	5	18	24	-
£10.00-£19.99	1,468	1,245	111	3	8	11	21	69	-
£20.00-£29.99	1,667	1,412	105	11	5	18	25	91	-
£30.00-£39.99	1,629	1,431	79	4	11	12	28	64	30
£40.00-£49.99	1,633	1,444	64	8	3	11	20	83	75
£50.00-£59.99	1,334	1,196	57	5	2	8	8	58	55
£60.00-£69.99	1,088	988	48	4	3	2	4	39	46
£70.00-£79.99	634	579	27	3	1	2	1	21	56
£80.00-£89.99	379	348	16	2	-	1	-	12	43
£90.00-£99.99	220	204	8	-	-	-	-	8	125
£100.00-£109.99	122	113	6	-	-	1	2	-	187
£110.00-£119.99	67	62	4	-	-	-	-	1	149
£120 & over	93	82	7	-	1	-	1	2	377
Average maintenance	£14.16	£34.80	£20.17	£0.27	£0.35	£4.51	£2.36	£4.36	£93.98

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.