

The Draft Child Support (Collection and Enforcement) (Amendments) Regulations 2012

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The Draft Child Support (Meaning of Child and New Calculation Rules) (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2012

Government response to consultation on Draft Regulations

November 2012

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Introduction

Background

1. The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (“the Commission”) became the Government body responsible for the child maintenance system in November 2008 and was established by the Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008. The Commission was abolished from 1 August 2012 and its functions and staff transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions (“the Department”). The Child Support Agency now functions as one of the ‘operational arms’ of the Department, providing the Government’s statutory maintenance service.
2. The Department currently operates two separate statutory child maintenance schemes; “the 1993 scheme” for applications received prior to 3 March 2003 and the “2003 scheme” for applications received after that date. The Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008 provides for a new child maintenance scheme, which will replace both of the two existing schemes. The main focus of the new scheme is to produce a more efficient, accurate and transparent process for assessing child maintenance payments. Detailed rules about the new scheme will be contained in regulations that were subject to public consultation between 1 December 2011 and 23 February 2012. The Government published its response to this consultation on 2 July 2012.
3. Following the consultation on the Child Support (Collection and Enforcement) (Amendment) Regulations 2012, the provisions have been merged with the Child Support (New Calculation Rules) (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2012. These merged regulations will be known as the Child Support (Meaning of Child and New Calculation Rules) (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2012. This decision does not alter the content of the consultation on the changes to deduction from earnings orders.
4. The Child Support (Meaning of Child and New Calculation Rules) (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2012 (“the Regulations”) amend Part 3 of the Child Support (Collection and Enforcement) Regulations 1992, which governs the making of deduction from earnings orders (“DEO”). The regulations also make some consequential amendments to other elements of child maintenance legislation.
5. A DEO is an administrative order, i.e. an order which is made by the Department without application to a court, requiring employers to make deductions from an employee’s earnings in respect of the employee’s liability to pay child maintenance and pay them to the Secretary of State, who will then pass them on to the parent with care. The amendments contained in these regulations make changes to the way the amount to be deducted by employers is set out and how provision for “protected earnings” is made.

Purpose of this document

6. The Government recognises the importance of listening to, and engaging with stakeholders, in order to benefit from their expertise and experience. The Commission contacted a wide range of stakeholders, including employer groups, payroll software providers and groups with an interest in child support maintenance, advising them of the consultation exercise.
7. This document sets out the main points made by respondents and provides the Government's response. This should not be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law. Such an interpretation can only be provided by a Court.
8. The final Regulations and accompanying explanatory memorandum will be available on the website managed by the National Archives at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/secondary/2012>

This document is available on the Department's website at:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2012/child-support-new-calc-regs.shtml>

Part 1 – Consultation summary

9. In addition to working with employer groups, including the Federation for Small Businesses and the Chartered Institute for Payroll Professionals, during the development of the changes and associated processes, the Commission contacted stakeholders on the launch of the consultation providing details of how to access the consultation document.
10. The formal consultation period ran for a period of 6 weeks from 23 April to 4 June 2012. Stakeholders could respond by email via a dedicated email address, accessed through the Commission's website.
11. We received eight responses to the consultation from a mixture of organisations and individuals. A list of respondents is at **Annex A**.
12. The Regulations will be laid before Parliament. It is the Government's intention that they will come into force in late 2012, subject to the Parliamentary process.

Summary of key proposals

13. The Regulations will:
 - i. Amend the manner in which the Normal Deduction Rate, for the purpose of a DEO **relating to a new scheme case**, is communicated to employers. The Normal Deduction Rate will be notified to employers as a monthly rate and also expressed in weekly, two weekly and four weekly terms. The employer will then choose which rate to apply, depending on the employee's actual pay frequency;
 - ii. Amend the way in which a non-resident parent's protected earnings, **relating to a new scheme case** are determined and communicated to employers for DEOs. The Protected Earnings Proportion will be specified as a percentage, which will be 60% of the employee's actual net earnings; and
 - iii. **The amendments will also apply to certain cases on the existing 1993 and 2003 child maintenance schemes.** A number of cases administered under these schemes that have been closed for the purposes of on-going maintenance, but have arrears of maintenance outstanding will be subject to the amended DEO provisions. These will generally be cases where either the clients are not eligible to open a new scheme case or have chosen not to do so. The new provisions will apply to such cases following notice being given to the non-resident parent. This will happen as a result of the case being moved onto the new computer system.

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14. Following the merging of the regulations (as detailed in paragraph 3) they will also:
- i. Amend regulations relevant to the existing 1993 and 2003 child maintenance schemes to deal with the change to the meaning of child, which increases the upper age limit from 19 to 20 years of age;
 - ii. Enable the child maintenance liability to be expressed as an annual amount on notification of that liability; and
 - iii. Introduce a duty on non-resident parents in specified circumstances to notify the Secretary of State where they have had an increase in current income. Such changes must be notified within 14 days from the date the change occurred.
15. Views on the provisions detailed in paragraph 14 were sought as part of the public consultation on the Child Support Maintenance Calculation Regulations 2012 and responses to matters raised were contained within the Government's response to that consultation, which was published on 2 July.
16. It is proposed that the Regulations will come into effect at the time the new child maintenance scheme goes live, which is intended to be in late 2012. The Regulations will apply to new scheme cases and a number of cases under the existing statutory schemes (as described above).

What you told us

17. Respondents raised no specific objections to the Government's proposed amendments to Part 3 of the Child Support (Collection and Enforcement) Regulations 1992. This is in line with the feedback received from stakeholders during the development of these amendments.
18. Some stakeholders felt that the amendments would simplify the DEO process and help to secure maintenance faster, particularly in non-compliant cases.
19. Some respondents did highlight that some costs may be incurred by employers, as a result of the proposed changes to DEOs. These costs had been estimated within the Impact Assessment which accompanied this consultation and stakeholders did not feel that the estimates were an inaccurate representation of the likely cost to business.

Additional comments

20. Additional comments received from stakeholders indicated some unease in relation to elements of the Child Maintenance Calculation Regulations 2012 ("the Calculation Regulations").
21. The main concern raised in relation to these Regulations was that only income changes of 25% or more would result in a change to the maintenance calculation. The issues raised related to how this could affect non-resident parents, particularly those on lower incomes.

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22. We will address these concerns and others that are not within the scope of this consultation within the 'additional comments' section of this document, on **page 16**. These matters have also been dealt with more fully in the Government's Response to the consultation on the Calculation Regulations, which was published on 2 July 2012.

Part 2 – The Draft Child Support (Meaning of Child and New Calculation Rules) (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2012

Summary of key proposals

Regulation 1 provides for the coming into force date of the Child Support (Meaning of Child and New Calculation Rules) (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2012 and defines terms used within them.

Regulations 2 and 3 amend the provisions dealing with the meaning of “child” in the current schemes, so that they take on the increase in age to 20, but maintain the position as it otherwise relates to those aged 16 and over.

Regulation 4(2) provides for the weekly child maintenance liability to be expressed as an annual figure and for a schedule of payments for the coming year to be given to parents.

Regulation 4(3) provides the definition of “normal deduction rate” for the purposes of deduction from earnings orders so that it is a sum of money expressed as a monthly rate and also in the equivalent weekly, two weekly and four weekly terms.

Regulation 4(4) provides that:

- (1) the normal deduction rate must be expressed as an equivalent period to that at which the non-resident parent is normally paid, whether that period is weekly, two weekly, four weekly or monthly
- (2) the employer must select the normal deduction rate which applies, according to their employee’s actual pay frequency
- (3) where the non-resident parent is paid at a frequency other than monthly or weekly, two weekly or four weekly, the Secretary of State must discharge the deduction from earnings order

Regulation 4(5) provides that:

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- (1) the period to which the protected earnings proportion is applied, must be to the same pay frequency that applies to the normal deduction rate, as defined in regulation 4(1)
- (2) the protected earnings proportion shall be 60% of the non-resident parent's net earnings, as calculated at the pay day of the non-resident parent by the employer

Regulation 4(6) provides that the Secretary of State must discharge the deduction from earnings order where the non-resident parent is not paid weekly, two weekly, four weekly or monthly

Regulations 5-7 and 9 amends existing child support regulations being carried forward into the new scheme either to:

- (1) remove or update cross-references to other child maintenance regulations ; or
- (2) reflect that certain existing provisions are no longer required or have been included within the Child Support Maintenance Calculation Regulations 2012.

Regulation 8 places an obligation on non-resident parents to report changes of circumstance within 14 days where they have been notified of this requirement and there is:

- (1) a positive liability in place (which is based on current employment income) and the non-resident parent has an increase in income of at least 25%; or
- (2) a nil rate liability in place on the basis of current income and the non-resident parent's income increases so that the nil rate would no longer apply.

Regulation 10 revokes current scheme regulations which will no longer apply once new scheme rules are in force.

Part 4 covers the necessary savings and transitional provisions.

What the Government proposed

23. Once the Regulations are in force, the Department will have the ability to make DEOs on new child maintenance scheme cases, which take account of the move to a gross income based maintenance calculation.
24. Details of the non-resident parent's ("NRP") income on the new scheme will be based on gross income data reported by HM Revenue and Customs to determine liability. This will mean that the NRP's net earnings and pay frequency will not generally be known by the Department. This necessitates changes to certain elements of DEOs, which had previously relied on this information.
25. Once these Regulations are in force, the Department will change the way the amount to be deducted is expressed on the DEO and how the provision for protected earnings is made.

Consultation Question 1: Do you think that the proposals to notify the Normal Deduction Rate in terms of monthly deductions and weekly, two weekly and four

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weekly equivalents take into account the pay frequencies at which the majority of employees are paid?

What you said

“We believe that this covers the main pay frequencies used by employers”.
- Federation of Small Businesses

“Yes”.
- Gingerbread

“The members agree with CMEC’s proposals to notify employers of the Normal Deduction Rate in terms of weekly, monthly, two weekly and four weekly. One additional comment was made that CMEC should also consider an annual amount”.
- Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals

“From an annuity providers perspective we have individuals who are paid by other frequencies - annually, half yearly and quarterly - it would be useful to have these included to avoid any unnecessary correspondence. Rather than maybe have to interpret it to multiply the monthly amount by 3, 6 and 12 accordingly.”
- Prudential

How the Government will take this forward

26. Having considered the responses received from stakeholders, who raised no significant objections to the approach proposed in the consultation, the Department will proceed with the proposed approach and notify employers of the normal deduction rate in weekly, two weekly, four weekly and monthly terms.

27. The Department has considered the suggestion that consideration be given to the Normal Deduction Rate being provided as an annual figure. However, it will not be taking forward this proposal. DEOs are used to collect regular and ongoing payments of child maintenance and where a NRP is paid annually, a DEO could not achieve this aim and would therefore not be appropriate. In these circumstances an alternative method of collection would instead be used.

Consultation Question 2: Will employers require further information from the Commission (in addition to the amount to be deducted) where aligning the Normal Deduction Rate to the pay frequency of their employees?

What you said

“As long as the instructions for the DEO to be successfully implemented are clear, particularly for DEOs that are to replace existing orders, we do not believe further information is necessary”.
- National Association for Child Support Action (NACSA)

“Members did not feel that further information would be required from CMEC, however one did request a “from” date. A further comment was made in respect of an employer’s ability to understand the impact of the Protected Earnings and the net pay base line below which earnings should not fall.”

- Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals

“Instruction and guidance should be provided for employers who pay on different frequencies so that they may multiply the frequency rates provided to meet their alternative pay frequencies”

- Federation of Small Businesses

How the Government will take this forward

28. Having considered the views of respondents, which highlighted no significant objections to the approach proposed in the consultation, the Department will continue with its intended approach with regard to the level of information provided to employers to assist them with aligning the Normal Deduction Rate with the NRP’s pay frequency.
29. One respondent requested that a “from date” be provided to assist the alignment of deductions to the employee’s pay frequency. The DEO will make clear when deductions should begin.
30. During the development of these proposals, the Government has worked closely with stakeholders, including the Federation for Small Businesses and employers whom the regulations impact upon, to ensure their introduction creates the most minimal impact possible and employers fully understand what is being done, why and what it means to them.
31. In order to further support the proposed amendments, the Department will also roll out support services for employers to assist in the administration of new scheme DEOs. Employers will have access to a dedicated employer support team whenever they need information or advice. This team will also contact employers upon receipt of their first new scheme DEO to explain how the DEO will work and answer any questions they may have. In addition, employers with 50 or more DEOs will be offered the opportunity to have a dedicated account manager and employers with 250 or fewer DEOs will be given access to an online self-service facility.
32. The Department will also send a Welcome Pack to every employer who receives a DEO under the new scheme which will provide information, advice and guidance about what DEOs are, why they are used and what employers need to do in order to meet their obligations.

Consultation Question 3: Do the proposals for the Protected Earnings Proportion for new scheme cases strike the right balance between the needs of non-resident parents and their obligation to pay child maintenance?

What you said

“Gingerbread supports the general principle that, whatever the income of the non-resident parent, the obligation to support one’s own children - to the extent possible – continues”.

“It is in no one’s interest if a non-resident parent is left with so little income to live on as a result of a DEO that a job becomes unsustainable. We recommend that:

- a. the Commission should also consider a higher protected earnings proportion where earnings dip below a certain absolute level;*
- b. support services should be developed for non-resident parents within the statutory maintenance service to assist them to sustain their maintenance commitments and resolve any difficulties standing in the way of them doing so;*
- c. the Commission should keep the new DEO provisions under review and carry out research on the impact of the new provisions after the first year of operation.”*

- Gingerbread

“It is noted that a dynamic protected earnings rate will eliminate the need for arrears of protected earnings which will bring simplification over the original orders. It is also noted that the proposal is more akin to families managing their budgets based on their actual earnings from payday to payday.”

- Individual response

“NACSA acknowledge the benefits that these proposals may bring in certain cases. Many of our PWC’s were pleased with the idea that a deduction would be taken from the NRP’s income irrespective of any fluctuation that arise.”

“That said, whilst appreciating measures needed to restrict the ability to voluntarily reduce income, we also have concerns about the consequences this may have for the NRP and his current family. Our initial concern would be in regards to the struggle an NRP would have in budgeting his finances. An NRP whose income is not static, and is subject to variation per week/month could suffer financially if a deduction per pay period is introduced.”

- NACSA

How the Government will take this forward

33. While the Government appreciates and has fully considered the suggestions made by stakeholders, the approach set out in the consultation will be pursued and the Protected Earnings Proportion (“PEP”) will be expressed as a percentage equal to 60% of the NRP’s net earnings.

34. DEOs have been operated, for the purpose of collecting child support maintenance, since 1993 and the amendments being made are minimal in the context of their operation as a whole.

35. In order to reflect the difficulties faced by NRPs on low incomes the Government has made provision, within the new scheme calculation regulations, for a reduced rate calculation, which will be applicable when a NRP’s gross earnings are under

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£200 per week. The new child maintenance scheme will calculate liability from gross income reported by HM Revenue and Customs, meaning it will be based on a NRP's *average earned income* for the previous tax year, which will take account of any income fluctuations.

36. The 60% PEP is a safeguard and is in place to ensure NRPs always retain a minimum level of earnings, following deductions in respect of child maintenance. It is not intended that 40% of NRPs earnings be deducted in every case – this is a maximum deduction. The normal deduction rate will define the actual deductions to be made by the employer, which will be reflective of the maintenance calculation, which in turn, is reflective of the NRPs actual income. A 40% deduction should only be used where arrears have accrued and the NRP has failed to repay those arrears or make an agreement to do so, or the NRP's income is reduced which could in turn mean that 40% of net earnings is deducted for child maintenance.
37. These amendments are reflective of the Governments view that a NRP's obligation to make child maintenance payments is not diminished by a reduction in income and bring child maintenance payments in line with the requirement to meet other financial obligations. The amendments also ensure that the parent with care will receive some level of maintenance payment in every period, this is because if the NRP's income is reduced the employer will be required to deduct up to 40% of the NRP's net earnings. Under the current provisions if an NRP's income falls below the PEP, no child maintenance will be deducted.
38. Respondents suggested that support services should be offered to NRPs to assist them in sustaining their commitment to pay child maintenance. These amendments have been developed in line with the Government's Green Paper, 'Strengthening families, promoting parental responsibility: the future of child maintenance' which was published on 13 January 2011. This paper set out the Government's commitment to provide more integrated support for families going through separation, recognising the range and complexity of the issues that parents face during this difficult time.

Consultation Question 4: Do you think the amendments to Deduction from Earnings Orders provisions are the correct approach to take into account the move from net to gross earnings (as the basis of maintenance liability) or can you suggest an alternative?

What you said

"We welcome a reduction in the contact between government departments and employers for earnings verification, this will reduce burden on business."
- Federation of Small Businesses

"We agree that amendments are necessary to achieve greater simplicity and speed in making deductions from earnings orders. However, safeguards are needed to protect non-resident parents with low earnings where the protected earnings proportion would be insufficient to support their basic living costs."

- Gingerbread

“Yes”

- Individual response

How the Government will take this forward

39. Respondents agreed that the proposed amendments are the right approach to account for the changes to the calculation of child maintenance liability and therefore the Government will proceed with the approach set out in the consultation.

40. The Government believes that sufficient safeguards are in place to protect NRPs, including those on low incomes, as set out in paragraphs 35-38 of this document. The amendments better reflect the NRPs real ability to pay in each pay period and ensures that the parent with care and qualifying children always receive at least some child maintenance.

Consultation Question 5: Do you think that the proposals for the Commission to notify employers of the Protected Earnings Proportion, in terms of a percentage rather than a monetary figure, produces a cost or a benefit to business? Please state your estimated cost or benefit of the proposed change.

What you said

“This would be an additional calculation that business would need to do and therefore it would not be a benefit but would add to the burden of the administration. It could also increase the risk of error and we would have a concern at any penalty that an employer may receive should an error be made on this additional calculation.”

- Federation of Small Businesses

“Although evidence from the various events has not raised any negative feedback in respect of the Protected Earnings Proportion being advised via a percentage, and in fact it is welcomed as other deduction orders tend to use percentage tables, the members do not believe there will be costs or benefits associated with the proposals.”

- Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals

How the Government will take this forward

41. The proposed amendments to DEOs are required as a result of the move to a gross income based maintenance calculation in the new child maintenance scheme. This move to gross income, where the information will be provided by HM Revenue and Customs, removes the need for employers to provide earnings information for NRPs and the proposed amendments enable this beneficial change to take place.

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42. The Department published an Impact Assessment together with the consultation document, which set out the estimated costs and benefits of these amendments. The Impact Assessment concluded that these proposals will reduce the regulatory burden on business by an average of £1.5 million per annum; an equivalent annual net cost to business (EANCB) of -£0.8 million which represents an OUT for One-in, One-out (OIOO) purposes.
43. Following consultation with stakeholders the Government are content that the costs to business highlighted in the Impact Assessment represent a fair and reasonable view of the expected costs, benefits and impact of the regulations, and that the benefits justify the costs.
44. The possibility of employers making errors when administering a new DEO in isolation or processing two types (A and B) of DEO concurrently was raised by stakeholders. As we said in paragraphs 31 and 32 of this document, the Department is introducing a range of support services and products for employers, to assist in the administration of new scheme DEOs, including a dedicated account manager for employers who administer 50 or more DEOs. It is envisaged that this support will significantly reduce the possibility of administrative error.

Consultation Question 6: Do you think the estimated additional cost associated to the upgrading of software to support these amendments, detailed in paragraph 70 and 71 of the accompanying Impact Assessment, is accurate? If not, please state how much you estimate the additional cost would be.

What you said

“With regards to the Impact Assessment surrounding paragraphs 70 and 77 the majority of respondents stated that the figures might be correct but were unsure.”

- Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals

“We appreciate that this issue has been recognised within this consultation. We understand the challenges of identify the numbers of employers impacted by this and placing a monetary value on the burden they will face.

Employers may not be able to just upgrading their software in order for it to be compliant. Some will need to replace their payroll software completely. This will involve the cost of new software, time in setting up a new payroll system and time and possible direct costs in training to understand how to use the software.”

- Federation of Small Businesses

“We do not agree with paragraph 77 of the Impact Assessment. If employers start to receive new orders in the Autumn of 2012 and payroll software will not be available to support the calculations before April 2013 there will be a major impact for the employers affected.”

- Payroll Alliance

How the Government will take this forward

45. It is clear from the responses received that stakeholders agreed there would be costs associated with the upgrade to payroll software to support the Regulations, as highlighted within the Impact Assessment which accompanies these regulations. The Government is therefore content that the estimated costs published in the Impact Assessment represent a fair and reasonable view.
46. The Government also remains content that the changes to the child maintenance scheme, taken as a whole, represent an overall benefit to business.
47. One respondent raised the issue that the changes to payroll software would not be implemented until April 2013, but that the new scheme and the changes to DEOs will come into force in late 2012 and therefore there may be a significant impact on employers during the interim period. However, the Government expects that the number of new DEOs likely to be made between late 2012 and April 2013 will be very small, as the vast majority of existing cases will remain on the existing statutory schemes during this period, i.e. it is – mainly – only new applications for maintenance that may require a DEO under the amended regulations and therefore the impact on employers during this period should be very minor.
48. Certain stakeholders also raised concerns about a launch date of these changes being provided to payroll software providers. Through the Department's stakeholder engagement activities with payroll software developers, we have advised them that it is the intention to implement the new child maintenance scheme in late 2012.

Additional comments

What you said

“Under the future scheme, the annual child maintenance liability will remain unchanged unless there is a change of earnings of 25% or more. If the drop in the earnings was just under 25%, this could result in a 40% deduction from reduced earnings continuing for a prolonged period without readjustment, potentially resulting in real hardship. Moreover, whilst a non-resident parent who experiences a reduction in earnings of 25% or more will be able to seek an adjustment in the calculation from the Commission, the employer would presumably be obliged to continue to deduct the 40%.”

- Gingerbread

“We support measures that will secure regular and swift payments, particularly where there is evidence of non compliance. A DEO is an option that can achieve that objective but we find the application of these orders is inconsistent.”

“DEO's are a form of enforcement, and should remain as such. NRP's that have no history, and present no risk of non compliance, should not be routinely subjected to such measures.”

- NACSA

49. Respondents raised concerns about the circumstances under which DEOs are used. DEOs are primarily used as enforcement tools, however, some NRPs request to pay their child maintenance via this method. In cases where a DEO is used as an enforcement tool, this will be because the NRP has failed to provide an alternative method of collection, or has arrears outstanding which they have not made an acceptable agreement to pay. In such cases the NRP will be given sufficient warning, either verbally or in writing, of the intention to issue a DEO to their employer and given an opportunity to agree an alternative method through which to pay.
50. The Department appreciates the concerns raised that distress can be caused by the inappropriate use of DEOs as an enforcement tool. That is why the Department makes all possible efforts to resolve non-compliance and set up alternative payment arrangements, before taking enforcement action against NRPs.
51. The following two paragraphs briefly respond to comments that were received which relate to elements of the Child Maintenance Calculation Regulations 2012 (“the calculation regulations”). The Government’s response to the consultation on the calculation regulations was published on 2 July, and a copy of which can be found here:
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2011/cmec-regs-tech-consultation.shtml>
52. More than one respondent questioned the 25% change of circumstances threshold which will be introduced in the new scheme and raised concerns as to how NRPs could be impacted financially by this. The 25% threshold is intended to ensure that the administration associated with minor changes in income does not interfere with the efficiency of the new child maintenance scheme and the improved service this will provide to clients. The threshold also reduces the risk of such minor changes interrupting the flow of maintenance to children.
53. It is however proposed that all maintenance liabilities will be reviewed on an annual basis in the new scheme, to ensure the calculation remains up to date. Many people’s incomes do not change greatly from year to year and therefore historic income is considered close enough to a non-resident parent’s current circumstances. However, a calculation may be based upon non-resident parent’s current income if either parent can show that it is at least 25% different to the historic income figure.

Part 3 – Next steps

Working together

54. We would like to thank our stakeholders for their valuable input during the development of the changes, the associated process and during the consultation process. We will continue to involve our stakeholders going forward as we look to commence the Child Support (Meaning of Child and New Calculation Rules) (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2012.
55. Support networks have been set up to assist employers when administering DEOs including access to a dedicated employer support team, a dedicated account manager for employers with 50 or more DEOs and access to an online self-service facility for employers with 250 or fewer DEOs.
56. In addition to these networks and direct discussions we have had with employer groups, we have published a number of articles in trade magazines like 'Pay and Benefits' to highlight the changes to employers and their representatives and we will also be continuing to speak at industry events to raise awareness. Since the consultation exercise we have also successfully contacted over 1000 employers to explain the upcoming changes to how employer relationships will be managed and how ways of working will change under the new statutory child maintenance scheme.

Legislative process

57. The Regulations will be subject to the negative resolution procedure and will be laid before Parliament. It is the Government's intention that they will come into force in late 2012, subject to Parliamentary approval.
58. The Department will continue to actively engage with its stakeholders, including employers and parents' representative groups, to ensure the policy intent of the Regulations is maintained.

Annex A – List of organisations responding to the consultation

Gingerbread

National Association for Child Support Action (NACSA)

Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals

Federation of Small Businesses

Payroll Alliance

Prudential