

Equality Analysis for the Child Support Management of Payments and Arrears (Amendment) Regulations 2012

Strategic Thinking

1) Who needs to be involved?

Names	Role on assessment team
Corporate Affairs	Directorate/Service Area Lead
Kris Camponi	written by
Holly Greig	Contact for (if different to writer)
Sara Forrest	Equality & Diversity Advisor
Kevin Nelson	Legal Advisor
Holly Greig	Policy Advisor
Angela MacDonald	Customer representative

2) Scope of the Equality Analysis

What are the broad aim(s) / objective(s) of the regulations?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of the proposal or change? <p>Part Payment</p> <p>The purpose of introducing the power to accept part payment of arrears in full and final satisfaction of a debt is to enable money to flow to children in cases where it otherwise would not.</p> <p>The powers will be used in cases where the non-resident parent (NRP) is either unable or unwilling to pay the full amount and the parent with care (PWC) is willing to accept a lower amount. A PWC may also request that a part payment be made rather than wait for the entire amount of arrears to be paid off in accordance with any arrears agreement, or if any enforcement action has been exhausted.</p> <p>The power will enable a mutually agreeable resolution in these cases and potentially enable such cases to be closed, securing more money for children and reducing the number of cases and outstanding arrears that will need to be moved onto the new IT system.</p> <p>Write off</p>

The purpose of introducing the power to write off arrears is to enable the Secretary of State to write off arrears of maintenance, owed by non-resident parents to parents with care in the following limited circumstances and where it would be unfair or otherwise inappropriate to collect them:-

- the PWC (or child, in Scotland) has requested that the Secretary of State ceases to act in respect of the arrears ;
- the PWC, or child (in Scotland), has died;
- the NRP has died and recovery from deceased estate action is either not possible or has proved ineffective;
- arrears accrued from an unconverted Interim Maintenance Assessment (IMA) which was calculated between April 1993 and April 1995; or
- the non-resident parent has been informed by the Department that no further action would ever be taken to recover those arrears. This may be, for example, because a case officer felt that there had been mal-administration on the case and assumed they had authorisation to act in this manner.

Writing off these un-collectable arrears should enable the Department to present more accurate accounts to third parties, focus its attention and resources on cases with collectable arrears and avoid moving arrears unnecessarily to the new IT system.

- **Who does the proposal or change affect?**

Part Payment

We envisage the part payment power enabling the Department to get money flowing in cases where it otherwise would not, will benefit both parents with care and children.

The new power will also benefit NRPs who will be able to make one final lump sum payment (with the appropriate consent) to clear all their debt and, if appropriate have their case subsequently closed.

The change will also benefit the Department who will be able to conclude such cases to the satisfaction of all parties involved and clear debt from the caseload.

Write off

The write off power will benefit the Department by increasing the accuracy of its accounts. Writing off arrears that are not

truly owed, not collectable or not required by the PWC will allow the Department's accounts to provide a reflective picture of the outstanding arrears that are genuinely due and should consequently be pursued. This in turn will enable the Department to focus its attentions and resources on pursuing collectable arrears and reducing the amount of cases having to be moved to the new IT system.

- **How will the proposal or change be put into practice?**

Part Payment

The part payment power will, where appropriate, enable the Department to "broker" payment agreements between NRPs and PWCs and will be used as an extra tool to enable caseworkers to progress cases that could not previously progress due to the inability or unwillingness of the NRP to pay the full amount of the arrears owed. The Regulations require the Department to obtain the consent of the PWC (or where an application has been made under section 7 of the 1991 Act, a child in Scotland), before accepting any offer of part payment from the NRP.

The Department does not intend to proactively use this tool in the first instance. It will instead, as a basis of testing the effectiveness of the power, only react to offers made by clients.

Write off

The write off power may be used as and when an appropriate case presents itself as part of business as usual activity or a specific exercise may be carried out to identify and write off appropriate arrears, though this will depend on resources available. The power will only be used on a case by case basis and any decision to write off will take into account all of the circumstances of the case.

Where the Department is considering write off, the Regulations require the Department to allow both parties the opportunity to make representations about such a decision and these must be taken into account when making the final decision as to whether to write off the arrears.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

Part Payment

- To get money flowing to children in more cases.
- To enable the Department to progress, conclude and close appropriate cases to the satisfaction of all parties
- To reduce the number of cases unnecessarily moved to the new IT system.

Write off

- Tidy up the arrears base to enable the Department to present more accurate accounts.
- To enable the Department to focus its attentions and resources on pursuing collectable debt.
- To enable the Department to close appropriate cases and reduce the number of cases unnecessarily moved onto the new IT system.

3) Which pieces of legislation / regulations / best practice codes / other policies is it relevant to?

- Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008
- Child Support Act 1991

Gathering Evidence

4) Data & Research

Commencing these powers does not represent a significant change to Child Support legislation.

Part Payment

As this power is new to the Department, there has to date been no specific analysis or research carried out as to the potential impact of implementing it. As a result, there is a lack of empirical evidence on how the part payment of arrears power may impact the Department's different client groups.

It is assumed that the part payment power will have a small impact on our overall client base. Where the arrears in question are owed to the PWC, both parents must be in agreement to make and accept part payment in full and final satisfaction. The Department is unable to enter into a part payment agreement with an NRP without the appropriate consent from the PWC (or the qualifying child in Scotland).

No individual or group will be disadvantaged because all parties will be equally able to make (in the case of NRPs) and accept or reject offers (in the case of PWCs) and in the first instance, the Department will only be reacting to offers instigated by clients. In the longer term it is anticipated the Department will be able to utilise the power to potentially instigate negotiations with the NRP to 'broker' agreements between parents as part of a more proactive approach. The Department will refrain from offering any form of financial advice or making any attempts to influence either parent when discussing an offer of part payment.

The choice of whether or not to agree to such a part payment agreement will be entirely the decision of the parents involved.

It is possible that the part payment power could still have a minor impact on the public, beyond the internal workings of the Department and the accounts it publishes (see section 6).

During the period of consultation, between the 19 December 2011 and 12 March 2012, stakeholders felt that the Department should give particular consideration to whether a person's ability to repay amounts of arrears has been severely impacted by a limited income due to a disability.

Write Off

For write off, the Department is currently able to use existing administrative data to provide analysis on the following equality groups only (see Annex A):

- PWC age
- NRP age
- PWC gender
- NRP gender

And cases in which the NRP or PWC have died, the arrears have been permanently suspended or are a result of Interim Maintenance Assessment (a penalty assessment put in place where non-resident parents refused to provide information to the Child Support Agency) arrears accrued between April 1993 – April 1995 can be identified, however identifying cases where the PWC does not wish to pursue arrears would only be possible by operationally working all cases (post write off of other groups) at least to the point of PWC contact, which is not currently feasible.

Communication

An internet and DWP library search was conducted to source empirical and theoretical evidence in relation to other general policy areas where part payment and write off of arrears are used. The desk research did not uncover evidence specifically in relation to the impact of part payment and write off of arrears on different demographic groups, however, research identified different information needs and experiences of interaction with CSA between client groups, thus any communications regarding the new powers will need to be tailored to clients' specific circumstances. Details of findings can be found in Annex B.

General Research

Through utilising historic research carried out by the CSA we are able to provide general statistics relating to equality groups. Details of which can be found in Section 6 and Annex C.

Existing sources	Key learning from data and research
CSA datasets (Analytical Team)	See Annex A
Internet and DWP Library search (Client Insight Research Team)	See Annex B

What new data and research do you need to help you find out the impact?

New sources:
•

5) Consultation and involvement

Existing consultation and involvement sources	Key learning
None.	

What new consultation, if any, do you need to undertake?

Who I need to consult with or involve	How I will consult with or involve them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full public consultation was carried out between the 19 December 2011 and 12 March 2012. • The following organisations responded to the consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gingerbread ○ Families Need Fathers ○ Resolution ○ The National Association for Child Support Action (NACSA) ○ Northern Ireland Assembly: Committee for Social Development ○ The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) 	•

Assessment & Action

6) Assess impact and outcomes

Negative Impacts

- Is there any unlawful discrimination? **No**
- Could any group get an adverse outcome? **No**
- Could any group be excluded from the benefits of the policy/function? **No**
- Does it reinforce negative stereotypes? **No**

Positive Impacts

- Does it promote equality of access or opportunity? **Yes** – Both parents will be participants in the process where arrears are owed to the PWC. No part payment arrangement can be reached without both parents consent.
- Does the policy/function address existing differential outcomes? **Yes** – the part payment power is making payment options more flexible and is likely to incentivise payment.
- Does it challenge negative stereotypes? **Yes**
- Does it give people real choices? **Yes**
- What, if anything, could be done to improve positive impact or promote equality? **N/A** – these regulations relate to our accounts and are not relevant to promoting equality.
- What would make it possible to reduce or eliminate adverse impact? We don't foresee there being any adverse impact.

Stake Holder Group	Potential Impact of Policy/Procedure Practice/Strategy/Service Area:	What action do you intend to take?
Religion and Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no data available on the religious affiliation of separated parents within the CSA client base. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence to suggest that specific groups subject to these policies will be treated any differently to other cases or groups within the CSA caseload • General research statistics for GB can be reviewed in Annex D. 	
<p>Age</p>	<p>Part Payment (also see Annex A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of administrative data shows that the majority of NRPs and PWCs across the entire caseload are between the ages of 30-59. • Analysis has shown that the profile of cases with arrears is similar to the entire caseload. Cases with arrears tend to be older cases and therefore NRP and PWC ages are slightly older than average. • We currently have no evidence to suggest the age profile of part payment cases would be any different to that of any other cases in the arrears base. <p>Write Off</p> <p>NRP or PWC has died</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases with a deceased party have, on average, older NRPs and PWCs than the rest of the caseload. So it is possible that this policy would have a more significant impact on older people. However the arrears will also have to be judged by the Department to be unfair or otherwise inappropriate to pursue i.e. because estate recovery action is not possible from the deceased NRP, or because the next of kin for the deceased PWC cannot be traced, in order for a decision to be made for the debt to be written off. So, where it is appropriate and possible to still collect the arrears, the Department will do so. Therefore we do not believe that either parent will be is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

	<p>disadvantaged by this policy.</p> <p>IMA Accrued between 5th April 1993 – 18th April 1995</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases with IMAs accrued between the specified dates have, on average, older NRPs and PWCs than the rest of the caseload. • Analysis was carried out on all IMA arrears where the following was observed: <p>PWC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 35% of cases with such IMA arrears, the PWC is over the age of 50 in comparison to 7% of the entire caseload. <p>NRP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 43% of cases with such IMA arrears, the NRP is over the age of 50 in comparison to 13% of the entire caseload. • In the majority of cases these arrears will have been suspended for a long period of time because collection was not deemed possible. The introduction of the write off policy is essentially a tidying up exercise in this instance. <p>PWC Does Not Wish to Pursue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual cases which will be subject to this policy cannot be identified (as explained on page 5) so there is no reason to believe any equality groups will be treated differently under this policy. PWCs already have the option of asking the Department not to pursue their arrears but current legislation only permits the Department to suspend any remaining arrears and to cease collection action for these suspended arrears. This new power will allow the PWCs request to be completely fulfilled by the Department to legally extinguish any remaining arrears owed to the PWC so that they no longer exist. 	
Ethnicity	<p>Research data – (Also see Annex C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research data shows the following CSA client ethnicity split of all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

	<p>respondents – 92% (White), 5% (Asian and other), 3% (refused to provide details).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A weighted sample base of 4,006 CSA client respondents was used and 4,006 unweighted base. • should be noted therefore that all research was carried out on CSA clients prior to 2008. • There is no evidence to suggest that specific groups subject to these policies will be treated any differently to other cases or groups within the CSA caseload 	
<p>Gender (inc. transgender)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no data available on transgender clients. <p>There is an argument that this power will allow so called “culpably negligent” NRPs a gateway to show that they do wish to take responsibility for their children, where they may previously have been judged as irresponsible or shirking their responsibilities.</p> <p>Part Payment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of administrative data shows that 96% of PWCs are female and 4% male. • Analysis has shown that the gender profile of cases with arrears is in line with the entire CSA caseload. • We currently have no evidence to suggest the gender profile of part payment cases will be any different to that of any other cases in the arrears base. <p>Write Off</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of administrative data has shown that the gender profile of cases with arrears is in line with the entire CSA caseload. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

NRP or PWC has died

- The gender profile on cases with a deceased party are in line with the rest of the caseload. However the arrears will also have to be judged by the Department to be unfair or otherwise inappropriate to pursue i.e. because estate recovery action is not possible from the deceased NRP, or because the next of kin for the deceased PWC cannot be traced, in order for a decision to be made for the debt to be written off. So, where it is appropriate and possible to still collect the arrears, the Department will do so. Therefore we do not believe that either parent will be disadvantaged by this policy.

IMA Accrued between April 1993 – April 1995

- The gender profile on cases with deferred arrears is in line with the entire CSA caseload.
- In the majority of cases these arrears will have been suspended for a long period of time because collection was not deemed possible. The introduction of the write off policy is essentially a tidying up exercise in this instance.

PWC Does Not Wish to Pursue

- Individual cases which will be subject to this policy cannot be identified, so there is no reason to believe any equality groups will be treated differently under this policy. PWCs already have the option of asking the Department not to pursue their arrears but current legislation only permits the Department to suspend any remaining arrears and to cease collection action for these suspended arrears. This new power will allow the PWCs request to be completely fulfilled by the Department to legally extinguish any remaining arrears owed to the PWC so that they no longer exist.

<p>Disabled People</p>	<p>Research data – (Also see Annex C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research data shows that 15% of CSA clients were registered with a disability, 83% had no disability and 2% refused to provide this information. • It should be noted that all research was carried out on CSA clients prior to 2008. • No evidence to suggest that cases with arrears or specific groups subject to these policies will be any different to the CSA caseload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no data available on the sexual orientation of separated parents within the CSA client base. • No evidence to suggest that cases with arrears or specific groups subject to these policies will be any different to the CSA caseload • General research statistics for GB can be reviewed in Annex D. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Marital status/civil partnership</p>	<p>Research data – (Also see Annex C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research data shows that 48% of CSA clients are married and 26% are living with their partner. The remaining 26% related to other types of relationships. • A weighted sample base of 4,006 respondents was used and 4,006 un-weighted base. • Research was carried out in 2008 before the Commission was formed. It should be noted therefore that all research was carried out on CSA clients prior to improvements introduced by the Commission. • There is no evidence to suggest that cases with arrears or specific groups subject to these policies will be treated any differently to other cases or groups within the CSA caseload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Maternity/Pregnancy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is currently no research data available to provide further insight into this equality group within the CSA client base. • There is no evidence to suggest that specific groups subject to these policies will be any treated any differently to any other cases or groups within the CSA caseload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

7) Formal agreement

Who will sign this off?	When?

8) Publication

Is it appropriate to add this Equality Analysis to the schedule at this time, if not when will this be reviewed?	How will you publish the results of the Equality Analysis?	Has a copy been sent to the Policy Team via 'CM HR Equality and Equality Analysis' mailbox ?
Yes.	By publishing the Equality Analysis on the Department's intranet and website, via the HR Policy Team.	Yes

9) Monitoring

What monitoring arrangements are in place?	Who will monitor and when?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be no requirement for monitoring because the Equality Analysis has identified no differential outcome for any group. 	N/A

Appendix A Equality Analysis Action Plan

Please list below any recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of carrying out the Equality Analysis. Ensure they are also incorporated into your business or service plans.

Date identified	Action points	Lead Officer	Timescale for completion	Resource Implications	Action taken (date)	Integrated in service plan?

ANNEX A – Age and Gender representation splits.

Illustrative ranges

Categories	PWC									NRP								
	Gender **		Age Range *							Gender		Age Range *						
	Male	Female	12-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	Male	Female	12-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79
All live cases (including	4%	96%	0%	19%	38%	36%	7%	0%	0%	96%	4%	0%	13%	34%	41%	11%	1%	0%
Arrears base	5%	95%	0%	16%	33%	37%	12%	2%	0%	95%	5%	0%	11%	29%	41%	16%	3%	0%
PWC does not wish to pursue arrears																		
PWC or NRP has died - (Arrears Base)	6%	94%	0%	3%	14%	37%	32%	11%	2%	94%	6%	0%	2%	10%	32%	34%	18%	4%
IMA arrears (arrears base) ***	3%	97%	0%	6%	19%	40%	26%	7%	1%	97%	3%	0%	4%	14%	39%	30%	12%	1%
Deferred Debt	3%	97%	0%	5%	28%	50%	16%	1%	0%	97%	3%	0%	3%	21%	50%	22%	3%	0%

* Cases with an age of 80+ or where no age has been recorded on the system have been excluded. These type of account for approximately 10% of the entire caseload.

** Trans gender cases or where no gender has been recorded on the system have been recorded. These type of cases account for approximately 10% of the entire caseload.

*** Administrative data on IMA arrears accrued between April 1993 - April 1995 not available to carry out analysis.

****Figures are rounded to nearest whole percentage point. As a result figures may not round to 100% and estimates of 0% should not necessarily be interpreted as showing no membership for the relevant group.

ANNEX B - Communicating Information to Clients Groups

An internet and DWP library search was also conducted to source empirical and theoretical evidence in relation to other general policy areas where part payment and write off of arrears are used. The desk research did not uncover evidence in relation to the impact of part payment and write off of arrears on different demographic groups.

However CSA Client Insight research¹ provides some information on how the communication of changes to the new powers could be tailored to the needs of the Department's equal opportunities client groups. This information relates to these groups *in general* and does not specifically represent the views of the client group with arrears who might benefit from the new regulations related to settlement of arrears. This information is presented below.

It should be noted that there is no data available to link the arrears caseload to these ethnicity groups.

Furthermore, the evidence is based on clients' views before the Commission was established. Thus, they may not represent people's views about the CSA's service provision today. The group differences discussed below are statistically significant. To put the findings in context, however, the following data is provided on the overall volumes in the equal opportunities groups contacted in the above client insight research.

- 92% of CSA clients were of a White ethnic background – 5% were from a Black Minority ethnic group, Asian or other (referred to from now on as BME), 3% refused to answer the question.
- 83% of CSA clients did not have a disability, 15% agreed they had a longstanding limiting illness, disability or infirmity² and 2% refused to answer.

¹ <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2007-2008/rrep471.pdf>

The study used a mixed methodology approach – 15 focus groups with CSA clients across the country and 4,006 telephone interviews with CSA clients – to explore their experiences and perceptions of the service provided by the CSA at various touch-points of the client journey, e.g. application and assessment, case maintenance, debt enforcement etc.

² The question asked was; Do you have any long standing limiting illness, disability or infirmity that gives you substantial difficulties in any aspect of your day to day life? By long standing, I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of at least 12 months or is likely to affect you over a period of 12 months?

1. Communications and interaction with the CSA

The research explored the extent to which clients agreed that they could contact the CSA in a way that suited them.

Ethnicity

Generally speaking those from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) groups were less likely to agree that they could contact the CSA in a way that suited them.

- 53% of BME origin clients strongly or slightly agreed that they could contact the CSA in a way that suited them compared to 63% of White clients who agreed strongly or slightly that this was the case.

Illness and/or disability

The research also found that clients with an illness/disability were less satisfied with the way they interacted with the CSA.

- 55% of those with an illness/disability agreed strongly or slightly that they could contact the CSA in a way that suited them compared to 64% of those who did not have an illness and/or disability.
- 47% of those with an illness/disability agreed strongly or slightly that the CSA was easy to contact compared to 56% of clients who did not have an illness/disability.
- 45% of clients with an illness/disability agreed strongly or slightly that the CSA contacts them in a way that suited them compared to 54% of clients without an illness/disability.

Gender³

There were some interesting differences in PWC and NRP clients' views on their interaction with the CSA.

- 69% of PWC clients agreed strongly or slightly that they could contact the CSA in a way that suited them compared to 54% of NRP clients.

³ We have made an assumption here and in the sections below examining Gender differences that a PWC is female and the NRP is male. We know this is usually the case but not always.

- 69% of PWC clients agreed strongly or slightly that they could contact the CSA at a time that suited them compared to 58% of NRP clients.
- Less than 45% of NRP clients agreed strongly or slightly that the CSA was easy to contact, compared to 63% PWC clients.

The above findings suggest that clients with an illness/disability, BME groups and males (NRPs) may have different issues in relation to contacting the Department, compared to other client groups. There may also be different issues in relation to how the Department contacts these particular clients. In order to minimise any adverse impact these groups the communications about the part payments and write off of arrears powers need to be tailored to the needs of these client groups.

2. Online information

This study also explored the extent to which clients agreed that the CSA's website contained the information they were looking for.

Ethnicity:

The findings indicate that the website may be less clear and may not contain information of relevance to those from BME groups.

- Almost a half (48%) of BME origin clients strongly or slightly agreed that the website contained the information they were looking for compared to 58% of white origin clients.
- 55% of BME clients agreed strongly/slightly that the information on the website was clear and easy to understand, whereas 71% of White clients agreed this strongly/slightly.

Disability and/or Illness

Similar views were expressed by clients with a disability and/or illness who felt that the website may not contain information relevant to them and experienced problems in finding and understanding the information on the CSA's website.

- 31% of clients with an illness and/or disability agreed strongly or slightly that the website contained the information they were looking for compared to 59% of clients without an illness and/or disability.
- 39% of clients with an illness and/or disability agreed strongly or slightly that it was easy to find the information they were looking for on the website, compared to 62% of those without an illness and/or disability.

- Just over a half (51%) of clients with an illness and/or disability agreed strongly/slightly that the information on the website was clear and easy to understand compared to 71% of clients who did not have an illness and/or disability.

Gender

- 67% of PWC clients agreed strongly or slightly that it was easy to find the information they were looking for on the website, compared to 56% of NRP clients.

Again these findings suggest that any information provided on the Department's website about the part payments and arrears' write off powers should be accessible in a format that suits the needs of clients of different Ethnic origins, i.e. in different languages, as well as of clients with a disability, i.e. bigger letter format, audio format etc. This will allow all client groups to have equal access to the same information and make informed decisions.

3. Letters, leaflets and information packs

The research gauged people's views on whether the CSA letters, leaflets, or information packs provided sufficient information.

Disability and/or Illness

The findings showed that those with an illness and/or disability may be more inclined to think that letters, leaflets and information packs do not provide sufficient information for their needs.

- 43% of clients with a an illness and/or disability agreed strongly or slightly that the letter they received from the CSA provided them with all the information they needed compared to 54% of those without an illness and/or disability.
- 60% of clients with an illness and/or disability agreed strongly or slightly that the leaflet or information pack provided them with all the information they needed compared to 70% of those without an illness and/or disability.

Gender

- 57% of PWC clients compared to 49% of NRP clients strongly or slightly agreed that the letter provided them with all the information they needed.

- 75% of PWC clients compared to 55% of NRP clients strongly or slightly agreed that the letter was clear and easy to understand.
- 76% of PWC clients agreed strongly or slightly that the leaflet or Information pack provided them with all the information they needed compared to 65% of NRP clients.
- 79% of PWC clients agreed strongly or slightly that the leaflet or information pack was clear and easy to understand compared to 65% of NRP clients.

Again, this suggests that any written communications about the part payment and arrears' write off should be tailored so that they are equally accessible and meet the information needs of all client groups.

4. Views on CSA employees knowledge of processes

The research examined the extent to which clients agree that CSA employees displayed good knowledge of the CSA processes and provided them with the information they needed.

Ethnicity

Clients from BME groups were less likely to feel that CSA employees had a good knowledge of the CSA processes and were also less likely to provide them with the information they needed.

- 33% of BME clients agreed strongly or slightly that CSA employees displayed a good knowledge of the CSA child maintenance process compared to 45% of white clients.
- 31% of BME clients agreed strongly or slightly that CSA employees provided the information they needed on how the child maintenance process works compared to 45% of white clients.

Gender

PWC clients were also more likely to rate higher the CSA employees knowledge of the process compared to NRP clients.

- One half (50%) of PWC clients agreed strongly or slightly that CSA employees displayed good knowledge of the CSA child maintenance process compared to 39% of NRP clients

- 31% of NRP clients agreed strongly or slightly that CSA employees were able to deal with any queries or issues they raised about their case while 45% of PWC clients agreed strongly or slightly.

5. Satisfaction with maintenance amount

Finally, the study explored CSA clients' satisfaction with the maintenance amount calculation.

Ethnicity

Clients from BME groups were less likely to be satisfied with the overall maintenance amount compared to white clients.

- 12% of clients from BME groups strongly or slightly agreed that the maintenance amount was an adequate contribution towards the cost of supporting their child, compared to 21% of clients from a white origin.

Gender

PWC and NRP clients' views about the maintenance calculation also differed.

- 35% of PWC clients strongly or slightly agreed that the maintenance amount was affordable, whereas 16% of NRP clients strongly or slightly agreed.
- Interestingly, while 30% of NRP clients agreed or strongly agreed that the maintenance amount calculated was an adequate contribution towards the costs of supporting their child, only 10% of PWC clients strongly or slightly agreed.

These differences may imply that some groups may be less likely to accept a smaller amount as part payment in full and final satisfaction of the amount owed. Appropriate interventions may need to be designed in order to help parents negotiate and agree the part payment amount and have their accounts closed.

Annex C – Child Support Agency Client Insight Research

Page 58 in the document below provides further information relating to Section 6.

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2007-2008/rrep471.pdf>

Annex D – General research statistics (GB)

Religion

- Research data⁴ shows that 82% of adults aged 16 and over in England and Wales reported having a religion in 2008/09; 18% reported having no religion.
- The largest proportion of those with a religious affiliation reported being Christian, with 72% stating that this was their religion. The next most common religious groups reported were:
 - Muslims (4%)
 - Hindus (2%),
 - 1% reported being Sikh and
 - 1% reported being Buddhist
 - 3% of people responded 'other religion'.

ONS HIS data⁵ also show that in April 2009 to March 2010:

⁴ The 2008/09 Race, Religion and Equalities Topic Report based on data from the Citizenship Survey. The Citizenship Survey is based on a nationally representative sample of approximately 10,000 adults in England and Wales with an additional sample of around 5,000 adults from ethnic minority groups. Face-to-face fieldwork was carried out with respondents from April 2008 to March 2009 by interviewers from the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen).

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government (2009). 2008-09 Citizenship Survey: Race, Religion and Equalities Topic Report. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/171385.pdf> and ONS (2011). Lifestyles and Social participation, Social Trends 41. http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/social_trends/ST41-Lifestyles.pdf

⁵ ONS (2011) New ONS Integrated Household Survey: Experimental Statistics. <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/ih0910.pdf>

Sexual Orientation

Integrated Household Survey (IHS)⁵ data indicate that:

- 94% (46,659,000) of adults identified themselves as Heterosexual/Straight
- 1% (466,000) of adults identified themselves as Gay or Lesbian
- 0.5% (229,000) of adults identified themselves as Bisexual
- 0.5% (246,000) as 'Other'
- 3% (1,597,000) of adults stated they 'Don't know' or Refused the question
- fewer than 1% (320,000) of respondents provided No response to the question

The 'Other' option on the question was to address the fact that not all people will fall in the first three categories.

The IHS estimate of 1.4% Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual (LGB) is broadly consistent with other household surveys in the UK that asked questions about sexual identity. This is also consistent with previous research which found survey estimates range between 0.3% and 3% (Betts, 2008)⁵.

Sexual orientation and marital status

Heterosexual respondents were much more likely to be in a formally registered relationship such as marriage or civil partnership than those who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual. IHS data show that:

- Around half (47.7%) of the heterosexual respondents were married and living with their spouse, compared with one-fifth (16.4%) of those who identified as LGB
- 12.3% of those respondents who identified as LGB were, or had previously been, in a legally recognised Civil Partnership.

Sexual identity by legal marital status, April 2009 to March 2010

United Kingdom	%					
	Single (never married)	Married , living with spouse	Married, separated from spouse	Divorced	Widowed	Currently or previousl y in a civil partnersh ip
Heterosexual/straight	32.6	47.7	3.0	9.3	7.4	<0.1
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual	63.2	16.4	1.3	6.0	0.8	12.3
Other	35.9	40.8	3.9	8.1	10.8	0.5
Don't know / Refusal	40.0	35.5	3.4	8.0	12.9	0.1
Non response	53.9	39.6	1.3	4.1	0.9	0.2

The total number of eligible responders to this question was 238,206

- 71% of people in Great Britain stated their religion was Christianity
- 4% stated their religion was Muslim
- 21% stated they had No religious affiliation