

Experimental Statistics: Preliminary estimates of Children Benefiting from an Effective Family-based Maintenance Arrangement Secured After Contacting Child Maintenance Options, GB - as of end of September 2015

Coverage: Great Britain

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Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions' strategic objective around child maintenance is to ensure the maximum number of children who live apart from one or both parents benefit from an effective maintenance arrangement through family-based arrangements or statutory means. Child Maintenance (CM) Options contributes towards this objective by providing free, impartial information and support to help separated parents make decisions on the child maintenance arrangement that best meets their needs. DWP monitors the child maintenance outcomes for separated parents who have telephone contact with CM Options.

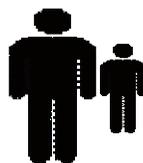
This is the second official release of this type of information produced quarterly. Annual results are also reported. These quarterly results are preliminary and will be revised in the publication of annual results for 2015/16.

Headline Outcomes as at the end of September 2015



8,600

effective family-based arrangements were made or changed after contact with CM Options.



13,600

children benefited from effective family-based arrangements made or changed after contact with CM Options.



11%

of customers made or changed an effective family-based arrangement after contact with CM Options.



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Background

The Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) strategic objective around child maintenance is to ensure the maximum number of children who live apart from one or both parents benefit from an effective maintenance arrangement. These arrangements can be through the court system, the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) or a Family-Based Arrangement (FBA).

FBA's referred to here are child maintenance arrangements which parents have agreed between themselves.

Where an effective FBA is referred to, for the purpose of this research it is defined as either:

- A regular financial arrangement where at least some of the agreed maintenance amount is always/usually received on time and the parent being surveyed considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well;
- or an ad hoc arrangement which includes a financial element (or transaction in kind, e.g. school uniform) and the parent being surveyed considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well.

CM Options has contributed towards this goal since it was created in July 2008. It was created to help separated parents choose the child maintenance arrangement that best suits them, for the benefit of their children, by providing information on the different ways they could accomplish this.

Now well-established, CM Options continues to provide this information, but encourages separated parents to choose an FBA where this is a viable and appropriate option.

The CM Options service is predominantly telephone based. Agents provide free, impartial information and support (including literature and various tools) covering arrangements through both statutory mechanisms and private means. They also provide information on how to deal with wider separation issues such as housing, work and money.

DWP monitors the child maintenance outcomes for separated parents who have telephone contact with CM Options. This is done through regular customer telephone surveys. To help ensure customers receive the support they need to

make their own decisions on child maintenance, CM Options do not have performance targets relating to the type of arrangements customers put in place. The main results from these surveys are outlined above on page 1.

The survey management, design and analyses are conducted by analysts in the DWP. The survey fieldwork is carried out by the CM Options supplier on behalf of the DWP.

Changes to Future Publications

As a result of changes to survey methodology these statistics are still undergoing a period of development and review. They are classified as experimental statistics and so they may be revised in future editions. Additional measures may be included in future publications when DWP analysts are assured of the quality of the data.

We welcome comments around this work from users and interested groups.

Upcoming Releases

The next release of Experimental Statistics will contain quarterly statistics on outcomes as at the end of December 2015. This will cover customers who have been in contact with CM Options during August to October 2015.

Statistical significance

These estimates are based on a sample of telephony customers in contact with CM Options. **Statistical significance** is an expression that says whether an estimated value is likely to have arisen only from variations in the sampling.

It is most often used for differences, where a *statistically significant difference* is one that is not likely to be attributed to chance and therefore likely to be a real difference. When a difference in proportions is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, it is 95% likely that the difference is real and not likely to be only due to variations in the sampling.

None of the differences in this release are statistically significant unless specifically stated – indicated by an asterisk (*).

Effective FBAs after contact with CM Options

Main Findings

At the end of September 2015:

The percentage of customers who made/changed an effective FBA after contact with CM Options was 11%.

A total of 8,600 effective family-based arrangements were made or changed after contact with the Child Maintenance Options service.

These arrangements have benefited 13,600 children.

It is important to note it is possible that parents would have made these arrangements regardless of their contact with CM Options.

See **Table 1 in the annex** for full data.

Other effective FBAs

Main Findings

Effective FBAs that are in place that were not secured as a result of contact with CM Options are termed “Other effective FBAs”.

At the end of September 2015, there were 7,900 “Other effective FBAs” in place, benefitting a total of 12,900 children.

Ten per cent of all customers had this arrangement.

Of this ten per cent over 90% were retained effective FBAs. Retained effective FBAs are effective FBAs that were made before contact with CM Options and which have not changed since contact.

The remainder consists of a small number of arrangements made by people who could not remember if their family-based arrangement was set up before or after contact with CM Options.

See **Table 2 in the annex** for full data.

All arrangement outcomes

Arrangement type	Quarter 2 flow (at the end of September 2015)¹	%
Any effective FBA	16,500	21
<i>Effective FBAs made/changed after contact with CM Options</i>	8,600	11
<i>Other Effective FBAs²</i>	7,900	10
CSA/ CMS arrangements	36,200	47
Court arrangements	1,000	1
No child maintenance interest/reconciled	200	0
Non-effective FBAs	3,400	4
No arrangement	19,500	25
Total	76,800	100

1 Some numbers may not add up due to rounding.

2 Over 90% of the effective FBAs in the 'Other Effective FBAs' category are retained effective FBAs. Retained effective FBAs are effective FBAs that were made before contact with CM Options and which have not changed since contact.

It is possible for parents to have more than one type of arrangement. This can occur where a parent has more than one child that qualifies for child maintenance and different arrangements are made for different children. This creates a risk of double counting the same parent.

In order to overcome the problem of double counting we have used a hierarchy principle which reflects the various arrangement types in the Child Maintenance reform programme.

A parent's primary arrangement covers their youngest child. However, if they have more than one arrangement, their secondary arrangement is the one that covers the most children. If equal numbers of children are covered by different arrangements, then the one with the second youngest child is categorised as their secondary arrangement.

The 2012 CMS scheme is designed to make parents pause and think about their options before applying to use the statutory service, which is intended to help those who cannot make a FBA. Some parents may choose to make their own arrangement through the courts. There are situations where no arrangements are agreed by the parents.

A customer is considered to have an effective FBA if either the primary or secondary arrangement is an effective FBA. A CSA/CMS arrangement is considered to be in place if either the primary or secondary arrangement is a CSA/CMS arrangement and neither is an effective FBA. A court arrangement is considered to be in place if either the primary or secondary arrangement is a court arrangement and neither is an effective FBA or a CSA/CMS arrangement.

It is expected that the proportion of effective FBAs made or changed after contact with CM Options will increase as a result of the Reforms Programme. The proportion of CSA/CMS arrangements is expected to drop while that of no arrangements is expected to go up. It is not expected that the reforms will have a significant impact on the proportion of people choosing to make a court arrangement.

Effective FBAs categorised by type of customer; BAU and case closure

Summary of effective FBA statistics¹

June and September 2015 quarters

	Percentage of FBAs (%)	Number of effective FBAs	Number of children benefiting	Population of telephony customers	Sample size
Effective FBAs made/changed after contact with CM Options	12	18,600	29,400	150,865	1,743
BAU ²	14	16,600	26,600	119,461	1,015
Case Closure	6	1,900	2,800	31,404	728
Other Effective FBAs³	10	15,400	24,900	150,865	1,743
BAU	11	12,700	20,600	119,461	1,015
Case Closure	9	2,700	4,300	31,404	728

1 Effective FBA and children benefiting figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred. Some numbers may not add up due to rounding.

2 BAU refers to Business As Usual customers.

3 Over 90% of the effective FBAs in the 'Other Effective FBAs' category are retained effective FBAs. This statistic remains true when split down by type of customer; BAU or Case Closure.

Some of the customers in contact with CM Options are going through the process of having their legacy Child Support Agency (CSA) cases closed. These "case closure" customers have had a child maintenance arrangement with the CSA and have the choice, among other options, of applying to the new Child Maintenance Service (CMS). All other customers are Business As Usual customers (BAU).

Data from June 2015 and September 2015 quarters are combined to produce separate results on BAU and case closure customers. The volume of case closure customers in contact with CM Options is relatively small compared to BAU customers. See **Table 3 & 4 in the annex** for full data.

A greater proportion* of BAU customers made or changed to an effective FBA after contact with CM Options compared to case closure customers.

14% of BAU customers made or changed to an effective FBA after contact with CM Options compared to 6% of case closure customers. This difference in proportions is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

The difference in proportions of BAU and case closure customers having an "Other effective FBA" is not statistically significant.

All arrangement outcomes categorised by type of customer; BAU and case closure

Arrangement Outcomes

June and September 2015 quarters

	Percentage (%)			Number of arrangements ¹		
	BAU ²	Case closure	Total	BAU	Case closure	Total
Any effective FBA	25	15	22	29,300	4,600	33,900
<i>Effective FBAs made/changed after contact with CM Options</i>	14	6	12	16,600	1,900	18,600
<i>Other Effective FBAs³</i>	11	9	10	12,700	2,700	15,400
CSA/ CMS arrangements	43	45	43	51,000	14,200	65,200
Court arrangements	1	0	1	1,500	100	1,500
No child maintenance interest/reconciled	0	0	0	300	0	300
Non-effective FBAs	5	3	5	6,300	900	7,200
No arrangement	26	37	28	31,000	11,700	42,700
Total	100	100	100	119,500	31,400	150,900

1 Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Some numbers may not add up due to rounding.

2 BAU refers to Business As Usual customers.

3 Over 90% of the effective FBAs in the 'Other Effective FBAs' category are retained effective FBAs. This statistic remains true when split down by type of customer; BAU or Case Closure.

A greater proportion* of BAU customers have an effective FBA compared to case closure customers. 25% of BAU customers have an effective FBA compared to 15% of case closure customers. This difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

A greater proportion* of case closure customers have no arrangement compared to BAU customers. 37% of case closure customers have no arrangement compared to 26% of BAU customers. This difference in proportions is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Methodology

Definitions

The main objective of this research is to measure:

The number of children benefiting from an effective FBA secured (made or changed) after parental contact with the CM Options service as at the end of September 2015.

There are effective FBAs in place that were not secured as a result of contacting CM Options. We call these "Other effective FBAs".

This includes parents who secured an effective FBA before contact with CM Options and those who cannot remember whether their arrangement was set up before or after contact with CM Options.

Survey Design

The data are produced through the quarterly surveys conducted by the CM Options supplier on behalf of DWP.

Our target population is composed of separated parents who have had a full telephone conversation with CM Options. A full telephone conversation is a conversation in which they have discussed all the child maintenance options available to them. These customers fall into two groups: inbound and outbound. Inbound calls are from customers to the service proactively seeking information and/ or support. Outbound calls are from CM Options to consenting customers referred on by Jobcentre Plus.

The sample is drawn to a stratified simple random sample design, where the strata are call type (inbound/outbound) and month of call (calendar month). An additional level of stratification - type of customer (case closure/ Business As Usual) - has recently been included. Case closure customers were oversampled for outcomes as at the end of June and September 2015 to ensure we could produce robust statistics by type of customer. The results are weighted up to the population of telephony customers who had a full conversation with CM Options to ensure the results are representative. Customers are identified as case closure customers if, when asked how

they knew to contact CM Options, they reported they received a CSA case closure letter.

Case closure customers have a child maintenance arrangement with the CSA that is in the process of being closed due to the introduction of the new CMS. All other customers are Business As Usual customers.

There is a minimum of two months between the customer's first contact with CM Options and the time they are first contacted in the quarterly survey. This is to allow time for arrangements of any type to be set up.

Certain types of customers are excluded from the sampling frame for practical purposes, including non-English speakers and customers who opt out of being contacted for research purposes.

Results are weighted up to the telephony population of those who had a full conversation with CM Options and so will adjust for non-response, but not necessarily non-response bias.

Measuring the flow

Each quarter customers are surveyed to determine the actual outcome of their conversation with CM Options, i.e. whether an arrangement was made.

The flow for the second quarter of 2015/16 (with outcomes as at the end of September 2015) covers customers in contact with CM Options during May to July 2015.

The next annual results of outcomes will be reported to the end of March 2016 so that we have a robust annual view on the number of current effective FBAs that are in place after contact with CM Options and the resultant number of children benefiting.

Flow by arrangement type

The flow is estimated not only for effective FBAs but also for other arrangement types: CSA/CMS, court, no child maintenance interest/reconciled, non-effective FBAs and no arrangement.

Notes

Uses and Users

The main users of the statistics in this document include: the public, external interest groups, Parliament, Department for Work and Pensions Ministers, Ministers and officials in other Government departments, academics, the media and external commentators and Department for Work and Pensions policy and operational officials.

These Experimental Statistics are used by a number of internal stakeholders for:

- Monitoring and reporting performance trends against key indicators
- Informing briefing, lines to take and press releases
- Internal communications
- Answering Parliamentary Questions and Freedom of Information requests
- Undertaking internal analysis and producing more detailed figures
- Setting internal performance measures
- Policy evaluation and to help external users gauge the effectiveness of Child Maintenance Systems

Our external, internet based, publication means that we are unable to identify all of the ways this publication will be used externally. However, we do know the experimental statistics are used for:

- Providing general information on the Child Maintenance Options Service in Great Britain
- Measuring performance of the Child Maintenance Options Service
- Informing discussions and meetings with external stakeholders and MPs
- Social research and academic studies of the effectiveness of social policy

Feedback Welcome

The Department for Work and Pensions is always glad to hear the comments and views of customers on these Experimental Statistics. Please email cm.analysis.research@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

Annex

Table 1 - Detailed Results: Effective FBAs made/changed after contact with CM Options and resulting number of children benefiting from these arrangements, as at the end of September 2015 (reported to the nearest hundred).

Quarter	Customers' month of first contact with CM Options	Population of telephony customers	Sample size	Effective FBAs after contact with CM Options			Resultant number of children benefiting			Percentage of customers with an effective FBA after contact with CM Options	Average number of children benefiting per effective FBA
				Total	CI Low	CI High	Total	CI Low	CI High		
September	May - Jul 15	76,789	1,107	8,600	6,700	10,500	13,600	10,300	16,900	11%	1.6

*Some numbers may not add up due to rounding.

**CI stands for confidence interval calculated at the 95% level. So for example, we can be 95% certain that the true number of effective family-based arrangements secured after contact with CM Options by the end of September 2015, lies between 6,700 and 10,500.

***Note customers in contact with the service were given a minimum of two months before they were surveyed to allow them time to form arrangements.

Table 2 - Detailed Results: Other effective FBAs (not secured after contact with CM Options) and resulting number of children benefiting from these arrangements, as at the end of September 2015 (reported to the nearest hundred).

Quarter	Customers' month of first contact with CM Options	Population of telephony customers	Sample size	Effective FBAs not secured as a result of contact with CM Options			Resultant number of children benefiting			Percentage of customers with an effective FBA not secured as a result of contact with CM Options	Average number of children benefiting per effective FBA
				Total	CI Low	CI High	Total	CI Low	CI High		
September	May - Jul 15	76,789	1,107	7,900	6,200	9,600	12,900	9,700	16,100	10%	1.6

*Some numbers may not add up due to rounding

**CI stands for confidence interval calculated at the 95% level. So for example, we can be 95% certain that the true number of other effective family-based arrangements (not secured as a result of contact with CM Options) by the end of September 2015, lies between 6,200 and 9,600.

***Note customers in contact with the service were given a minimum of two months before they were surveyed to allow them time to form arrangements.

Table 3 - Detailed Results: Effective FBAs made/changed after contact with CM Options and resulting number of children benefiting from these arrangements, as at the end of June and September 2015 combined, broken down by type of customer (reported to the nearest hundred).

Quarter	Customers' month of first contact with CM Options	Type of customer	Population of telephony customers	Sample size	Effective FBAs after contact with CM Options			Resultant number of children benefiting			Percentage of customers with an effective FBA after contact with CM Options	Average number of children benefiting per effective FBA
					Total	CI Low	CI High	Total	CI Low	CI High		
June & September	Feb - Jul 15	All	150,865	1,743	18,600	15,300	21,800	29,400	23,800	35,000	12%	1.6
June & September	Feb - Jul 15	BAU	119,461	1,015	16,600	13,600	19,700	26,600	21,300	31,900	14%	1.6
June & September	Feb - Jul 15	Case closure	31,404	728	1,900	1,300	2,500	2,800	1,800	3,800	6%	1.4

*Some numbers may not add up due to rounding

**CI stands for confidence interval calculated at the 95% level. So for example, we can be 95% certain that the true number of effective family-based arrangements secured after contact with CM Options by the end of June and September 2015 combined, lies between 15,300 and 21,800.

***Note customers in contact with the service were given a minimum of two months before they were surveyed to allow them time to form arrangements.

Table 4 - Detailed Results: Other effective FBAs (not secured after contact with CM Options) and resulting number of children benefiting from these arrangements, as at the end of June and September 2015 combined, broken down by type of customer (reported to the nearest hundred).

Quarter	Customers' month of first contact with CM Options	Type of customer	Population of telephony customers	Sample size	Effective FBAs not secured as a result of contact with CM Options			Resultant number of children benefiting			Percentage of customers with an effective FBA not secured as a result of contact with CM Options	Average number of children benefiting per effective FBA
					Total	CI Low	CI High	Total	CI Low	CI High		
June & September	Feb - Jul 15	All	150,865	1,743	15,400	12,600	18,100	24,900	20,100	29,800	10%	1.6
June & September	Feb - Jul 15	BAU	119,461	1,015	12,700	10,100	15,300	20,600	16,000	25,200	11%	1.6
June & September	Feb - Jul 15	Case closure	31,404	728	2,700	2,000	3,300	4,300	3,000	5,600	9%	1.6

*Some numbers may not add up due to rounding

**CI stands for confidence interval calculated at the 95% level. So for example, we can be 95% certain that the true number of other effective family-based arrangements (not secured as a result of contact with CM Options) by the end of June and September 2015 combined, lies between 12,600 and 18,100.

***Note customers in contact with the service were given a minimum of two months before they were surveyed to allow them time to form arrangements.

Table 5: Population and Sample Totals.

Quarter	Month of customer contact	Population of telephony customers			Survey sample of customers			Total responses	
		Inbound		Outbound	Inbound responses		Outbound responses		
		BAU	Case Closure	BAU	BAU	Case Closure ¹	BAU		
June	Feb-15	14,227	3,929	5,062	23,218	80	49	56	185
	Mar-15	15,226	5,094	6,633	26,953	52	106	61	219
	Apr-15	13,289	5,249	5,367	23,905	62	96	74	232
September	May-15	12,870	4,843	5,328	23,041	181	89	90	360
	Jun-15	14,676	5,597	6,869	27,142	79	173	95	347
	Jul-15	14,992	6,692	4,922	26,606	107	215	78	400
Total		85,280	31,404	34,181	150,865	561	728	454	1,743

¹ Case closure customers were oversampled for outcomes as at the end of June and September 2015 to ensure we could produce robust statistics by type of customer. The results are weighted up to the population of telephony customers in contact with CM Options to ensure the results are representative.