

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 December 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.

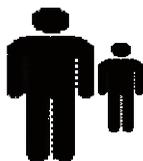
This is the third official release of this type of information produced quarterly and covers customers in contact with CM Options during August to October 2015. (See page 8 for details on the methodology). Annual results are also reported. These quarterly results are preliminary and will be revised in the publication of annual results for 2015/16.

Headline Outcomes as at the end of December 2015



8,600

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



12,100

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.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Contact

Lead: Matthew Edmundson

Department for Work and Pensions

Email:

cm.analysis.research@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Feedback welcome

Press Office: 020 3267 5129

Out of hours: 020 3267 5144

Website: www.gov.uk/dwp

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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 annual statistics on outcomes as at the end of March 2016. This will cover customers who have been in contact with CM Options during February 2015 to January 2016. The publication of annual results updates the figures for the preliminary quarterly statistics including this quarterly publication.

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 December 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 12,100 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 December 2015, there were 5,000 “Other effective FBAs” in place, benefitting a total of 7,700 children.

Seven per cent of all customers had this arrangement.

Of this seven per cent, over 95% 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 3 flow (at the end of December 2015)¹	%
Any effective FBA	13,600	18
<i>Effective FBAs made/changed after contact with CM Options</i>	8,600	11
<i>Other Effective FBAs²</i>	5,000	7
CSA/ CMS arrangements	37,000	49
Court arrangements	600	1
No child maintenance interest/ reconciled	300	0
Non-effective FBAs	4,600	6
No arrangement	20,200	26
Total	76,300	100

1 Some numbers may not add up due to rounding.

2 Over 95% 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.

The aim of the CM reforms is to encourage and support more families to make their own collaborative arrangements and to deliver a more efficient and effective statutory service to those who really need it. This is delivered by promoting the financial responsibilities that parents have for their children and by providing information and support about the different child maintenance options that are available through CM Options.

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 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.

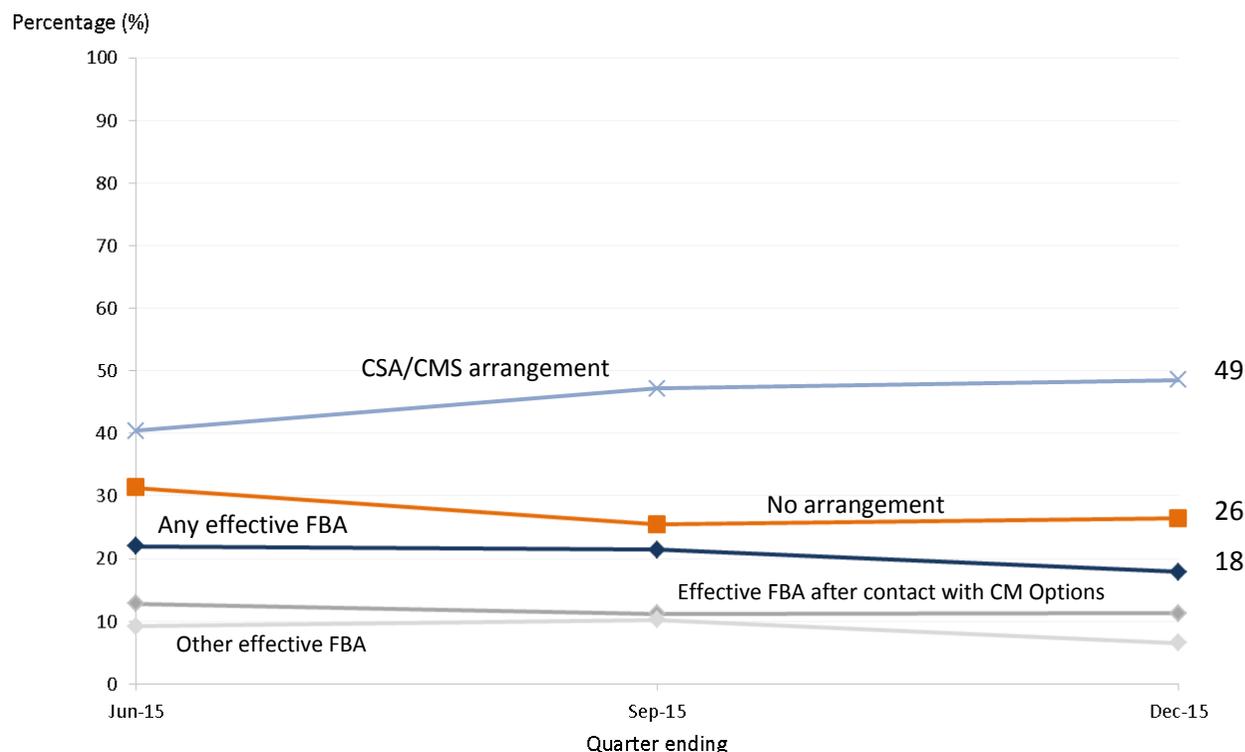
A customer is considered to have an effective FBA if either the primary or secondary arrangement is an effective FBA. A CSA/CMS arrangement is considered to be in place if either the primary or secondary arrangement is a CSA/CMS arrangement and neither is an effective FBA. A court arrangement is considered 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 overall proportion of effective FBAs will increase as a result of the 2012 CM reform 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 separated parents choosing to make a court arrangement. The statistics in this publication relate only to those customers who have had a telephone conversation with CM Options.

Trend of main arrangement types

Percentage of CSA/CMS arrangements has increased whilst the percentage of effective FBAs and no arrangements has decreased since June 2015.

Arrangement outcomes as at the end of June, September and December 2015.



Note: Any effective FBA is made up of effective FBAs made or changed after contact with CM Options and “Other effective FBAs”.

The **percentage of statutory scheme arrangements has statistically significantly* increased from June to December**. 40% of CM Options customers had a CSA/ CMS arrangement at the end of June compared to 49% at the end of December 2015.

There has been a statistically significant* decrease in the percentage of no arrangements from June to December. 31% of CM Options customers had no arrangement at the end of June and this decreased to 26% at the end of December 2015.

The **percentage of effective FBAs has statistically significantly* decreased**. At the end of June 2015, 22% of CM Options customers had an effective FBA compared to 18% at the end of December 2015. This decrease is because the percentage of “Other effective FBAs” significantly* decreased in December compared to June 2015.

*The differences in proportions are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

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

Summary of effective FBA statistics¹

June, September and December 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	27,200	41,500	227,206	2,777
BAU ²	14	23,900	37,100	175,666	1,765
Case Closure	6	3,300	4,400	51,540	1,012
Other Effective FBAs³	9	20,300	32,600	227,206	2,777
BAU	10	17,000	27,500	175,666	1,765
Case Closure	6	3,300	5,100	51,540	1,012

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).

CSA cases are being closed in a structured way so that the risk of disrupting maintenance payments is minimised.

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 95% 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.

Data from June, September and December 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.

A greater proportion* of BAU customers had an “Other effective FBA” compared to case closure customers. 10% of BAU customers had an “Other effective FBA” compared to 6% of case closure customers.

*The differences in proportions are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

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

Arrangement Outcomes¹

June, September and December 2015 quarters

	Percentage (%)			Number of arrangements		
	BAU ²	Case closure	Total	BAU	Case closure	Total
Any effective FBA	23	13	21	41,000	6,600	47,600
<i>Effective FBAs made/changed after contact with CM Options</i>	14	6	12	23,900	3,300	27,200
<i>Other Effective FBAs³</i>	10	6	9	17,000	3,300	20,300
CSA/ CMS arrangements	43	53	45	75,100	27,100	102,200
Court arrangements	1	0	1	2,100	100	2,100
No child maintenance interest/reconciled	0	0	0	600	0	600
Non-effective FBAs	6	3	5	10,000	1,800	11,800
No arrangement	27	31	28	47,000	15,900	62,900
Total	100	100	100	175,700	51,500	227,200

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

2 BAU refers to Business As Usual customers.

3 Over 95% 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.

Statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level are commented on.

A greater proportion* of BAU customers have an effective FBA compared to case closure customers. 23% of BAU customers have an effective FBA compared to 13% of case closure customers.

A greater proportion* of case closure customers have a CMS arrangement compared to BAU customers. 43% of BAU customers have a statutory arrangement compared to 53% of case closure customers.

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 December 2015.

There are effective FBAs in place that were not secured as a result of contact with 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 is produced through the quarterly surveys conducted by the CM Options supplier on behalf of the 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 to ensure we can 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 third quarter of 2015/16 (with outcomes as at the end of December 2015) covers customers in contact with CM Options during August to October 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 each quarter in 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		
June	Feb - Apr 15	74,076	636	9,500	6,900	12,100	14,600	10,200	19,000	13%	1.5
September	May - Jul 15	76,789	1,107	8,600	6,700	10,500	13,600	10,300	16,900	11%	1.6
December	Aug - Oct 15	76,341	1,034	8,600	7,200	10,100	12,100	9,800	14,500	11%	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 December 2015, lies between 7,200 and 10,100.

***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 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 each quarter in 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 after contact with CM Options			Resultant number of children benefiting			Percentage of customers with an effective FBA not secured after contact with CM Options	Average number of children benefiting per effective FBA
				Total	CI Low	CI High	Total	CI Low	CI High		
June	Feb - Apr 15	74,076	636	6,800	4,700	8,900	10,400	7,000	13,800	9%	1.5
September	May - Jul 15	76,789	1,107	7,900	6,200	9,600	12,900	9,700	16,100	10%	1.6
December	Aug - Oct 15	76,341	1,034	5,000	3,800	6,100	7,700	5,700	9,700	7%	1.5

*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 after contact with CM Options) by the end of December 2015, lies between 3,800 and 6,100.

***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 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, September and December 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		
Jun, Sep & Dec	Feb - Oct 15	All	227,206	2,777	27,200	23,600	30,800	41,500	35,500	47,600	12%	1.5
Jun, Sep & Dec	Feb - Oct 15	BAU	175,666	1,765	23,900	20,600	27,300	37,100	31,300	42,900	14%	1.6
Jun, Sep & Dec	Feb - Oct 15	Case closure	51,540	1,012	3,300	2,400	4,100	4,400	3,200	5,700	6%	1.3

*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, September and December 2015 combined, lies between 23,600 and 30,800.

***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, September and December 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 after contact with CM Options			Resultant number of children benefiting			Percentage of customers with an effective FBA not secured after contact with CM Options	Average number of children benefiting per effective FBA
					Total	CI Low	CI High	Total	CI Low	CI High		
Jun, Sep & Dec	Feb - Oct 15	All	227,206	2,777	20,300	17,400	23,300	32,600	27,400	37,800	9%	1.6
Jun, Sep & Dec	Feb - Oct 15	BAU	175,666	1,765	17,000	14,200	19,800	27,500	22,500	32,400	10%	1.6
Jun, Sep & Dec	Feb - Oct 15	Case closure	51,540	1,012	3,300	2,500	4,100	5,100	3,700	6,600	6%	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 after contact with CM Options) by the end of June, September and December 2015 combined, lies between 17,400 and 23,300.

***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
December	Aug-15	13,732	6,337	3,908	23,977	184	89	58	331
	Sep-15	16,037	7,639	4,534	28,210	202	105	68	375
	Oct-15	13,863	6,160	4,131	24,154	186	90	52	328
Total		128,912	51,540	46,754	227,206	1,133	1,012	632	2,777

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.