Child maintenance: The eligible population in Great Britain

Chris Bullen

A report of research carried out by the Department for Work and Pensions
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The Author

Chris Bullen is a statistician within the Child Maintenance Redesign Programme of the Department for Work and Pensions.
Summary

This paper looks at households who are eligible to receive child maintenance payments in Great Britain. It examines the characteristics of this group and the arrangements that they have in place.

There are around 2.5 million parents who are eligible to receive child maintenance in Great Britain. Based on their current marital status, 74 per cent of the eligible population are lone parents; 43 per cent are single and never married and 30 per cent are divorced. A further 14 per cent of the eligible population are married and living with their current husband or wife.

Based on the 2005 Families and Children Study, 52 per cent of the eligible population have a child maintenance agreement in place, of which 67 per cent of these receive the payment due to them. This is equivalent to around a third of the overall eligible population receiving a child maintenance payment.

Of those households who receive a child maintenance payment, the majority (63 per cent) report having a voluntary arrangement. Fourteen per cent report having an assessment made by the Child Support Agency (CSA) and a further 15 per cent have a combination of CSA and voluntary arrangements.

Sixty-six per cent of those in receipt of child maintenance payments report that they receive all of their payment on time. A further 19 per cent report that they receive all of their payment but that it is not always on time.

In 71 per cent of those households with an arrangement in place the respondent is currently in employment. This figure is only 49 per cent for those who do not have an arrangement in place.

The respondents from households where an arrangement is in place tend to be better educated than those who do not have an arrangement in place. More than a quarter (27 per cent) of those who do not have an arrangement in place have no formal qualification, compared to only 15 per cent of those who do have an arrangement. Twenty-six per cent of those who have an arrangement in place have a qualification of at least A-level (or SCE Higher) standard, this figure is 15 per cent for those without an arrangement in place.
Households with no maintenance arrangement in place are less likely to own their own home; 30 per cent of those households with no arrangement in place own their house outright or in part. This compares with 54 per cent of those with an arrangement in place. Those with no arrangement are more likely (51 per cent) to be a social housing tenant than those who have a maintenance arrangement (30 per cent).
1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this paper

This paper looks at the households eligible for child maintenance payments in Great Britain. It examines the characteristics of this group and the arrangements that they have in place.

1.2 About the data sources

1.2.1 Families and Children Study

The Families and Children Study (FACS) is a refreshed panel study of approximately 7,000 families in Great Britain, investigating the circumstances of all families with dependent children. It is designed to collect information about health, education, work, income, childcare and the wellbeing of children.

Families are sampled from Child Benefit records and are followed every year until their children are no longer dependent. New families (those that have had new babies since the last wave of the survey) are added to the sample every year. The mother is the main respondent in FACS. Partners are interviewed too and in some waves children aged between 11 and 15 are given a self-completion questionnaire.

This paper is based on the latest 2005 data (wave seven).

1.2.2 Caveats and interpretation

Within this paper analyses of household characteristics are based on the main respondent to FACS, unless otherwise stated.

The main respondent to FACS is usually the mother, though FACS does contain some lone fathers and occasionally the main respondent is male. Within the eligible child maintenance population only around three per cent of respondents are male.
The responses given to FACS are self-reported by the respondent and consequently can be misreported. This is particularly an issue when reporting whether a child maintenance arrangement is in place or not:

- those CSA cases who are nil-assessed often classify themselves as having no arrangement in place;

- those cases on the old scheme, who are on benefits, do not receive a maintenance disregard and may, therefore, also report having no maintenance arrangement;

- alternatively these cases may report having an arrangement but that they do not receive a payment; and

- nil-compliant cases can also be reported as not actually having an arrangement in place.

However, the responses to all questions within FACS can be subject to self-reporting issues.
2 Background

2.1 Policy context

The Child Maintenance and Other Payments Bill, introduced in June 2007, contains measures to reform the policy and delivery of child maintenance in the UK, establishing the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (C-MEC) a Non-Departmental Public Body to replace the CSA, simplifying the way maintenance is calculated, and providing tougher enforcement powers to collect maintenance arrears.

In summary these measures are:

• establishing a new child maintenance delivery organisation, to be known as the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (C-MEC), to deliver child maintenance and replace the CSA;

• encouraging parents to make their own child maintenance arrangements and giving them more choice about how they do so;

• streamlining and simplifying how child maintenance is calculated, enabling money to get to more children more quickly;

• introducing tougher enforcement powers to collect arrears of child maintenance from parents who fail to pay;

• introducing powers to collect and reduce child maintenance debt more effectively.

2.2 How we got to where we are

Sir David Henshaw was asked to develop proposals for a fundamental redesign of the child maintenance system. In July 2006 Sir David Henshaw published his recommendations. He proposed a more client-focused system where parents were encouraged to take increased responsibility in making their own arrangements, with the state encouraging and helping them to do so; by stepping in quickly when parents could not agree or where arrangements break down. The vast majority of the recommendations were accepted by the Government.

The Child Maintenance and Other Payments Bill was introduced to Parliament on 5 June 2007.
3 Characteristics of the eligible child maintenance population

3.1 Headline figures

There are around 2.5 million parents who are eligible to receive child maintenance in Great Britain. Latest evidence suggests that the breakdown of these parents by the type of maintenance agreement they have in place is as shown in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1 Breakdown of child maintenance arrangements of eligible parents**

3.2 Characteristics of the population

3.2.1 Basic information

The mean age of parents eligible for child maintenance payments in 2005 was 36 years of age. The median was 37.

For almost two-thirds of the households eligible for child maintenance payments the respondent (usually the mother) is aged between 30 and 44. Only ten per cent are aged under 25 and a further 15 per cent are aged 45 or over.

Figure 3.2 Eligible population by age group of respondent

![Eligible population by age group of respondent](image)

The eligible population are predominantly white; 92 per cent of the households eligible for child maintenance payments have a white respondent, four per cent are black and one per cent Asian. This matches the overall ethnic make up of the whole UK population, with latest data showing 7.9 per cent from a non-white ethnic group.¹

Table 3.1 Eligible population by ethnic group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Non-white</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population (%)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FACS Wave Seven (2005).

Note: Figures may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The households eligible for child maintenance payments are broadly evenly spread across the whole of Great Britain. Approximately one quarter live in London or the South East. Nine per cent live in Scotland and six per cent in Wales.

Table 3.2  Eligible child maintenance population by Government Office Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Office Region</th>
<th>Proportion of eligible population (%)</th>
<th>Overall Great Britain (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and Humber</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.2.2  Personal circumstances

Based on the respondent’s current marital status, 74 per cent of the eligible population say that they are lone parents; 43 per cent are single and never married and 30 per cent are divorced.

Only four per cent of the lone parents within the eligible population are male.

Figure 3.3  Eligible population by current marital status

Source: FACS Wave Seven (2005).
Half of the household population eligible for child maintenance payments have one dependent child. A further third have two children. Only six per cent have four or more children.

**Figure 3.4  Eligible population by number of dependent children**

![Bar chart showing the proportion of eligible population by number of dependent children.](chart)

Source: FACS Wave Seven (2005).

The youngest child in the household is under ten years of age for over two-thirds (69 per cent) of the population eligible for child maintenance payments (Figure 3.5). For only seven per cent of households is the youngest child 16-18 years old.

**Figure 3.5  Eligible population by age of youngest child**

![Bar chart showing the proportion of eligible population by age of youngest child.](chart)

Source: FACS Wave Seven (2005).

The vast majority of the eligible population either own (in part or outright) their home (43 per cent) or are a social housing tenant (40 per cent). Only 14 per cent of the eligible population are a private tenant.
Table 3.3 Eligible population by tenure type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure Type</th>
<th>Proportion of eligible population (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owned outright or in part</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social housing tenant</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tenant</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other arrangement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

3.2.3 Qualifications and employment

Over a half (55 per cent) of the respondents from households eligible for child maintenance payments say that they work for sixteen or more hours per week. A further quarter report that they look after the home or family. The remainder are most likely to be employed for less than 16 hours a week or unemployed and seeking work.

Table 3.4 Eligible population by employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Proportion of eligible population (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 or more hours</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after the home or family</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working fewer than 16 hours</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed and seeking work</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick/disabled (6 months or longer)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time education/at school</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for a sick, elderly or disabled person</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick/disabled (up to 6 months)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a training scheme</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).
Note: ‘*’ denotes value suppressed because of small sample size.

Just over half (56 per cent) of respondents from eligible households report that a GCSE is their highest qualification. Twenty-one per cent have an A-level (or equivalent) or better. Twenty-one per cent report having no formal qualification.
3.2.4 Maintenance arrangements

Fifty-two per cent of the eligible population say that they have a child maintenance agreement in place, of which 67 per cent of these receive the payment due to them. This is equivalent to around a third of the overall eligible population receiving a child maintenance payment.

Table 3.5 Receipt of child maintenance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion in receipt of child maintenance (%)</th>
<th>In receipt</th>
<th>Not in receipt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population who receive child maintenance payment</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of those with arrangements who receive child maintenance payment</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

Of those who receive a child maintenance payment the majority (63 per cent) report having a voluntary arrangement. Fourteen per cent report having an assessment made by the CSA and a further 15 per cent have a combination of CSA and voluntary arrangements (Table 3.6).

Chapters 4 to 7 of this paper consider these groups in receipt of maintenance payments in more detail.
Table 3.6  Type of child maintenance agreement in place (for households where the maintenance payment is received)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Court order</th>
<th>Voluntary agreement</th>
<th>CSA assessment</th>
<th>Combination of types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of population who receive maintenance payments (%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

Eighty-five per cent of those in receipt of child maintenance payments report that they receive all of their payment. Sixty-six per cent report that they always receive all of their payment and that it is always on time.

Table 3.7  Reliability of child maintenance payments (all types of agreement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Receives all and always on time</th>
<th>Receives all but not always on time</th>
<th>Receives some and always on time</th>
<th>Receives some but not always on time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of population who receive maintenance payments (%)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

Thirty-three per cent of the eligible population are in receipt of Working Tax Credit. Of those who receive a maintenance payment, the proportion who receive WTC is 41 per cent. Only 28 per cent of those who do not receive maintenance payments receive WTC.

Of the eligible population, 69 per cent are in receipt of Child Tax Credit. Of those who receive a maintenance payment, the proportion who receives CTC is higher at 78 per cent. Around two-thirds (64 per cent) of those not in receipt of a maintenance payment receive CTC.

Table 3.8  Receipt of Working Tax Credit (WTC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WTC</th>
<th></th>
<th>CTC</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In receipt</td>
<td>Not in receipt</td>
<td>In receipt</td>
<td>Not in receipt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population (%)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of population who receive maintenance payments (%)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of population who do not receive maintenance payments (%)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).
4  Child Support Agency arrangements

This chapter considers those respondents to FACS who reported that their household receives maintenance payments via a CSA assessment. The CSA assessment may be the sole arrangement by which their household receives maintenance payments, or it may be part of a combination of arrangements in place. Where a respondent reports a combination of arrangements, this is taken to be CSA arrangements and voluntary agreements.

This section of the analysis only includes those cases where maintenance is received. This differs from the analysis in Chapter 3 where the entire eligible population was included in the analysis, regardless of whether maintenance is received or not.

This wave of FACS was sampled during 2005. This means that the analysis in this chapter is not reflective of the latest performance of the CSA and will not include any of the improvements that have occurred through the Operational Improvement Plan.

Similarly, the results in this chapter are not directly comparable with CSA administrative statistics. This is because the self-reporting of maintenance arrangements may differ from administrative records – for example where the parent with care is using the CSA but is nil assessed, the non-resident parent is not compliant or where the parent with care is on the old scheme and all maintenance is currently taken into account in the Income Support calculation.

4.1  Demographics

4.1.1  Personal circumstances

In 2005, the average (mean) age of those receiving maintenance payments via a CSA arrangement was 37.2

2 The average age of the Parent/Person with Care in cases with an assessment or calculation via the CSA in June 2007 was 37; Source – Child Support Agency Quarterly Summary of Statistics (QSS).
Those with CSA and mixed arrangements are less likely to be under 25 than those in the eligible population as a whole. However, they are more likely to be over 40. Approximately half (52 per cent) are aged 25-39, which compares to 53 per cent for the whole eligible population.

**Figure 4.1 Age distribution of CSA and mixed arrangements and the whole eligible population**

Based on the respondent’s current marital status, those with CSA and mixed arrangements are most likely to report themselves as being divorced (41 per cent) or single and never married (33 per cent). Sixteen per cent are married and living with their husband or wife. FACS only reports on current marital status, meaning that although we do not know details of any previous marriages, it is likely that some parents who report that they are currently married and living with their husband/wife will have been divorced and have since remarried.

Source: FACS Wave Seven (2005).
4.1.2 The household

The distribution of the number of children within a household for those with a CSA or mixed arrangement is very similar to that of the whole eligible population, with around 80 per cent of households having two or fewer dependent children (Table 4.1). Similarly the distribution of the age of the youngest child differs very little between those with CSA arrangements and the whole eligible population (Table 4.2).

Table 4.1 CSA and mixed arrangements by number of dependent children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSA only</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA &amp; mixed</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).
Note: ‘*’ denotes value suppressed because of small sample size.
Table 4.2  CSA and mixed arrangements by age of youngest child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-4 years</th>
<th>5-10 years</th>
<th>11-15 years</th>
<th>16-18 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of CSA only arrangements (%)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of CSA &amp; mixed arrangements (%)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population (%)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

More than half (54 per cent) of families where maintenance is received via a CSA or mixed assessment own their house outright (or in part). This is a greater proportion than within the overall eligible population (43 per cent). Twenty-eight per cent are social housing tenants and 16 per cent private tenants.

Table 4.3  CSA and mixed arrangements by tenure type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Owned outright or in part</th>
<th>Social housing tenant</th>
<th>Private tenant</th>
<th>Other arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of CSA only arrangements (%)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of CSA &amp; mixed arrangements (%)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population (%)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).
Note: ‘*’ denotes value suppressed because of small sample size.

4.1.3  Employment and qualifications

Within families where maintenance is received via a CSA or mixed assessment the respondent is more likely to be in employment than for the overall eligible population. Seventy-three per cent of those receiving maintenance via a CSA arrangement report being in employment, this compares to 61 per cent of the eligible population as a whole.

Table 4.4  CSA and mixed arrangements by employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Working</th>
<th>Not working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of CSA only arrangements (%)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of CSA &amp; mixed arrangements (%)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

Just over half (57 per cent) of those with a CSA or mixed arrangement report that a GCSE is their highest qualification. Twenty-six per cent have an A-level (or equivalent) or first or higher degree. Fourteen per cent report having no formal qualification, this compares to 21 per cent for the overall eligible population.
Table 4.5  CSA and mixed arrangements by highest qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GCSE grade D-G and equiv</th>
<th>GCSE grade A-C and equiv</th>
<th>GCE A-level/SCE Higher grades(A-C) and equiv</th>
<th>First degree</th>
<th>Higher degree</th>
<th>Other academic quals</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of CSA only arrangements (%)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of CSA and mixed arrangements (%)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population (%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).
Note: '*' denotes value suppressed because of small sample size.

4.2  Maintenance issues

4.2.1  Reliability

Of those that say that they receive payments, half of those with CSA arrangements receive all of their payment on time. This compares to two-thirds for the whole eligible population.

Around three quarters of those with CSA or mixed arrangements report receiving all of their payment either on time or late. Twenty-eight per cent report that they only receive some of their payment.

Figure 4.3  Reliability of child maintenance payments (CSA and mixed arrangements)
5 Voluntary arrangements

This chapter considers those respondents in FACS who reported that their household receives maintenance payments via a voluntary arrangement. The voluntary arrangement may be the sole arrangement by which their household receives maintenance payments, or it may be part of a combination of arrangements in place. Where a respondent reports a combination of arrangements, this is taken to be CSA arrangements and voluntary agreements.

This section of the analysis only includes those cases where maintenance is received. This differs from the analysis in Chapter 3 where the entire eligible population was included in the analysis, regardless of whether maintenance is received or not.

5.1 Demographics

5.1.1 Personal circumstances

In 2005, the average (mean) age of those with a voluntary arrangement in place was 37.

Those with voluntary arrangements are slightly less likely to be under 25 than those in the eligible population as a whole. However, as a whole the age distribution of those with a voluntary agreement is very similar to the overall age distribution of the eligible population.
Based on their current marital status, of those receiving maintenance payments via a voluntary agreement, 35 per cent report themselves as being single and never married and a further 31 per cent as divorced.

**Figure 5.2 Current marital status of voluntary and mixed arrangements and the whole eligible population**

Source: FACS Wave Seven (2005).

5.1.2 The household

The distribution of the number of children of those with voluntary arrangements is very similar to that of the whole eligible population, with around 84 per cent
of households having two or fewer dependent children (Table 5.1). Similarly, the
distribution of the age of the youngest child differs very little between those with
voluntary arrangements and the whole eligible population (Table 5.2).

Table 5.1  Voluntary and mixed arrangements by number of
dependent children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of only voluntary arrangements (%)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of voluntary &amp; mixed arrangements (%)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population (%)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).
Note: ‘*’ denotes value suppressed because of small sample size.

Table 5.2  Voluntary and mixed arrangements by age of youngest
child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-4 years</th>
<th>5-10 years</th>
<th>11-15 years</th>
<th>16-18 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of only voluntary arrangements (%)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of voluntary &amp; mixed arrangements (%)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population (%)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

Fifty-nine per cent of families where maintenance is received via a voluntary
agreement or mixed arrangement own their own house outright (or in part). This
is a much greater proportion than for the overall eligible population (43 per cent).
Twenty-three per cent are social tenants and 14 per cent private tenants.

Table 5.3  Voluntary arrangements by tenure type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Owned outright or in part</th>
<th>Social housing tenant</th>
<th>Private tenant</th>
<th>Other arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of only voluntary arrangements (%)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of voluntary &amp; mixed arrangements (%)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population (%)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

5.1.3  Qualifications and employment
Seventy-eight per cent of those parents receiving maintenance via a voluntary
agreement or mixed arrangement report being in employment. This compares to
61 per cent of the overall eligible population.
Table 5.4  Voluntary arrangements by employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Working</th>
<th>Not working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of only voluntary arrangements (%)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of voluntary &amp; mixed arrangements (%)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

Of those parents who receive a maintenance payment via a voluntary agreement, 54 per cent report a GCSE as their highest qualification. Those with voluntary agreements are more likely than the eligible population as a whole to have a first or higher degree.

Parents who receive a maintenance payment via a voluntary agreement are less likely to have no formal qualifications than those in the overall eligible population; 12 per cent of those with a voluntary or mixed agreement report having no formal qualifications, this figure is 21 per cent for the eligible population as a whole.

Table 5.5  Voluntary and mixed arrangements by highest qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GCE level/SCE Higher grades (A-C)</th>
<th>First degree</th>
<th>Higher degree</th>
<th>Other academic quals</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCSE A-level/D-G and equiv</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE A-level/D-G and equiv</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of eligible population (%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

5.2  Maintenance issues

5.2.1  Reliability

Those households that report receiving their maintenance payment via a voluntary agreement report a broadly similar reliability in receiving their payments to the eligible population as a whole. Sixty eight per cent receive all their payment on time and a further 18 per cent receive all of it but not always on time. This compares to 66 per cent and 19 per cent respectively for the overall eligible population.
Figure 5.3 Reliability of child maintenance payments (voluntary and mixed arrangements)

Proportion of voluntary and mixed arrangements (percentages)

Proportion of population who receive maintenance payments (percentages)

Source: FACS Wave Seven (2005).
6 Court orders

This chapter considers those respondents in FACS who reported that a court order is the only route by which their household receives maintenance payments.

This section of the analysis only includes those cases where maintenance is received. This differs from the analysis in Chapter 3 where the entire eligible population was included in the analysis, regardless of whether maintenance is received or not.

Analysis of court orders has been restricted due to a relatively small sample size within FACS. Therefore, this chapter is less comprehensive than the chapters analysing CSA agreements and voluntary arrangements.

6.1 Demographics

6.1.1 Personal circumstances

Those with court orders tend to be older, on average, than the overall eligible population. The average (mean and median) age of those with court orders in place was 42 in 2005.

Court orders are most common amongst those who report themselves as being currently divorced; 60 per cent of those with court orders reported being currently divorced.

6.1.2 The household

The distribution of the number of children of those with court orders is very similar to that of the whole eligible population, with around 86 per cent of households having two or fewer dependent children.

The age of the youngest child of those who receive maintenance via court orders tends to be older than that of the whole eligible population; around 48 per cent of the youngest children are aged 11 or over. This compares to around a third for the whole eligible population. However, this is not surprising, as the average age of parents with court orders is also higher.
6.1.3 Qualifications and employment

Eighty-one per cent of those receiving maintenance via a court order report being in employment. This is greater than the proportion of those with a CSA agreement in work and greater than the proportion in work of those with a voluntary arrangement.

Table 6.1 Court orders by employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Proportion (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not working</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

Respondents with a court order tend to have a higher level of qualification than those in the eligible population as a whole. Thirty-one per cent of cases receiving maintenance via a court order report having a first or higher degree. This figure is only 11 per cent for the eligible population.

Overall, 87 per cent of those with court orders have a highest qualification of a GCSE at A-C or above, compared to 60 per cent for the eligible population as a whole.

6.2 Maintenance issues

6.2.1 Reliability

Those who receive maintenance payments through a court order are slightly more likely to receive their payment in full (either on time or late) than the whole population; 92 per cent for those with court orders compared to 85 per cent for the overall eligible population.
Figure 6.1  Reliability of child maintenance payments (court orders)

Source: FACS Wave Seven (2005).
7 No arrangements

This chapter considers those respondents who report having no child maintenance arrangement in place. Based on FACS, 48 per cent of the eligible population do not have an arrangement in place.

This subgroup of the eligible population is not in receipt of maintenance payments. However, there are known reporting issues that lead to respondents wrongly reporting that they do not have a maintenance arrangement in place. Firstly, those cases who are nil-assessed often classify themselves as having no arrangement in place. Similarly, those cases on the old CSA scheme, who are also on benefits, do not receive a maintenance disregard and therefore, often report having no maintenance arrangement. And finally nil-compliant cases can also be reported as not actually having an arrangement in place. Consequently, the analysis within this chapter should be treated with some caution.

7.1 Demographics

7.1.1 Personal circumstances

The average age of those with no arrangement in place is 36. Those with no arrangement in place are almost twice as likely to be under 25 as those with an arrangement.
Two thirds of those who do have an arrangement in place are aged 35 or over. The average age of those with an arrangement in place is 37.

More than half (52 per cent) of those with no arrangement are single and never married, compared to 34 per cent of those who have an arrangement. Thirty-six per cent of those with an arrangement report being divorced as their current marital status.

Source: FACS Wave Seven (2005).
7.1.2 The household

Fifty-three per cent of those households with no arrangement in place have one child, compared to 45 per cent for those who do have an arrangement. Overall, the distribution of the number of children of those with no arrangement in place is very similar to that of those with an arrangement in place.

Table 7.1 Arrangements by number of dependent children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all without arrangements (%)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all with arrangements (%)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

The distribution of the age of the youngest child differs very little between those with no arrangement and those who do have an arrangement in place.

Table 7.2 Arrangements by age of youngest child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-4 years</th>
<th>5-10 years</th>
<th>11-15 years</th>
<th>16-18 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all without arrangements (%)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all with arrangements (%)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

Households with no maintenance arrangement in place are less likely to own their own home; 30 per cent of those households with no arrangement in place own their house outright or in part. This compares with 54 per cent of those with an arrangement in place. Those with no arrangement are more likely (51 per cent) to be a social housing tenant than those who have a maintenance arrangement (30 per cent). The proportion who are a private tenant is very similar for both groups.

Table 7.3 Arrangements by tenure type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Owned outright or in part</th>
<th>Social housing tenant</th>
<th>Private tenant</th>
<th>Other arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all without arrangements (%)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all with arrangements (%)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005)
7.1.3 Qualifications and employment

Seventy-one per cent of those with an arrangement in place are in employment. This figure is only 49 per cent for those who do not have an arrangement in place.

Table 7.4 Arrangements by employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion %</th>
<th>Working</th>
<th>Not working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all without arrangements (%)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all with arrangements (%)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).

The respondents from households where an arrangement is in place tend to be better educated than those within the eligible population who do not have an arrangement in place. More than a quarter (27 per cent) of those who do not have an arrangement in place have no formal qualification, compared to only 15 per cent of those who do have an arrangement. Twenty-six per cent of those who have an arrangement in place have a qualification of at least A-level (or SCE Higher) standard, this figure is 15 per cent for those without an arrangement in place.

Table 7.5 Arrangements by highest qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grade D-G and equiv</td>
<td>grade A-C and equiv</td>
<td>grade A-C and equiv</td>
<td>grade A-C and equiv</td>
<td>grade A-C and equiv</td>
<td>grade A-C and equiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all without arrangements (%)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of all with arrangements (%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – FACS Wave Seven (2005).