

Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics

Data to September 2022

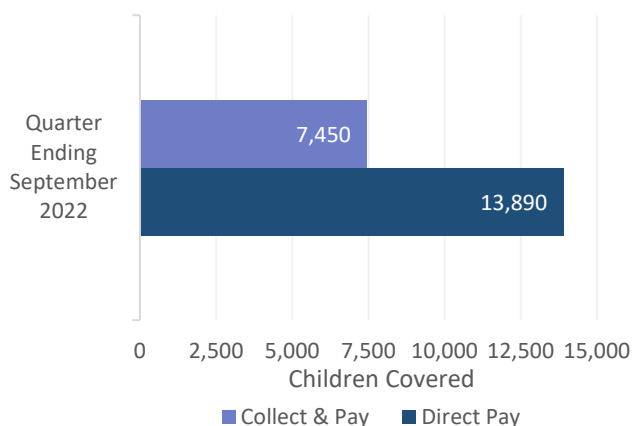
Quarterly publication (Experimental)

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Main Stories

Figure 1: Children covered by Child Maintenance Service arrangements

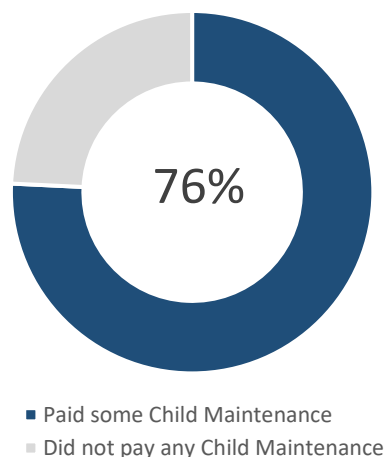


Source: [Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics, Data to September 2022, Table 4](#)

At the end of September 2022, there were **21,560** children covered by child maintenance arrangements. Of these,

- **13,890** children were covered by Direct Pay arrangements;
- **7,450** children were covered by arrangements through the Collect & Pay Service;
- **230** children were not yet assigned to a service (not shown in chart).

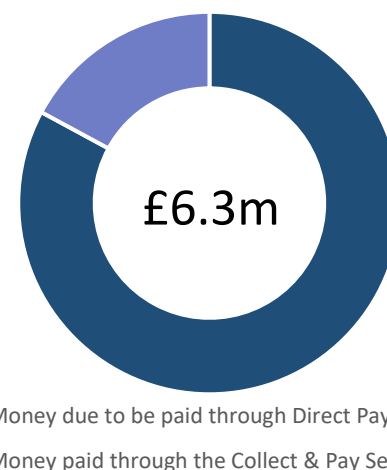
Figure 2: Paying Parents compliance on the Collect & Pay Service



Source: [Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics, Data to September 2022, Table 5](#)

Over three-quarters (**76%**) of parents due to pay child maintenance through the Collect & Pay service paid some maintenance in the quarter ending September 2022.

Figure 3: Child maintenance collected and arranged by the Child Maintenance Service



Source: [Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics, Data to September 2022, Table 6](#)

For the quarter ending September 2022, the Child Maintenance Service collected/arranged over **£6.3 million** in child maintenance. Of this,

- **£5,239,100** was arranged through the Direct Pay Service;
- **£1,081,200** was collected through the Collect and Pay Service.

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1. Introduction

The data in this publication relates to the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) 2012 Scheme which was introduced in December 2012 and is for separated parents who cannot arrange child maintenance between themselves. It replaced the previous 1993 and 2003 schemes.

This is the tenth publication of these statistics and the publication is still undergoing development and methodological improvements. As a result, the statistics have been classified as experimental and we would particularly welcome feedback on the publication. Please send comments to:

psu@communities-ni.gov.uk.

Lead statistician: Jennifer Davison

2. What you need to know

Child maintenance is financial support between separated parents to help with the everyday costs of looking after children.

If separated parents agree, they can arrange child maintenance themselves. This is called a 'family-based arrangement' and is a private way to arrange child maintenance. Parents arrange everything themselves and no-one else has to be involved.

The CMS is available to parents who cannot agree a family-based arrangement. Parents wishing to use the CMS must first contact Child Maintenance Choices (CM Choices).

CM Choices is a free service that provides impartial information and support to help separated parents make decisions about their child maintenance arrangements.

Where the CMS calculates the amount of maintenance to be paid and parents arrange the payments between themselves this is known as Direct Pay.

If parents cannot arrange the payments themselves or the Paying Parent does not pay what was agreed, the CMS can collect and manage the payments between the parents. This is the Collect & Pay service.

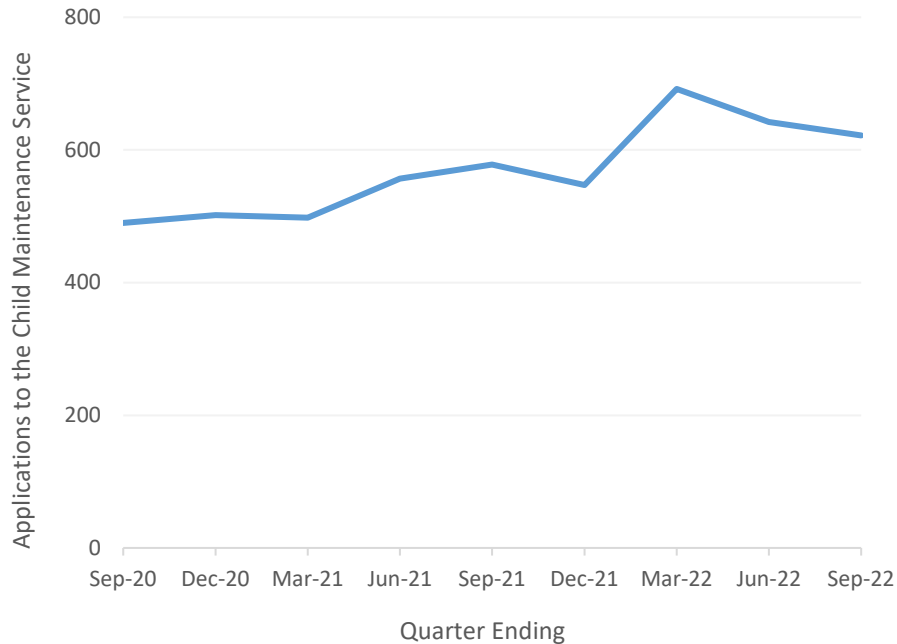
The CMS has a range of enforcement actions it can use if the Paying Parent refuses to pay their child maintenance.



Between July and September 2022,
1,510 calls were answered by CM choices

3. Applications to the Child Maintenance Service

Figure 4: Number of applications to the Northern Ireland CMS by quarter



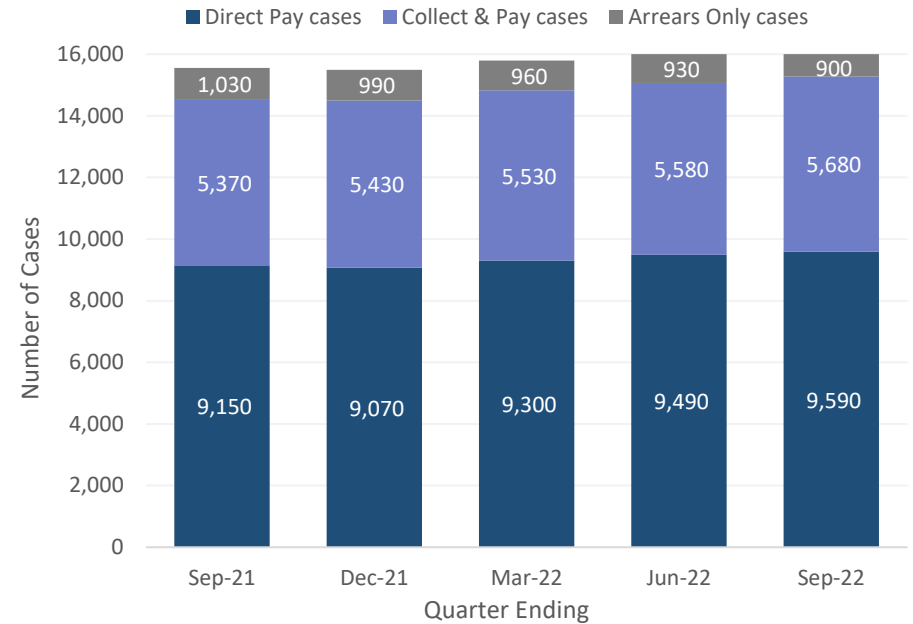
Source: [Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics, Data to September 2022, Table 1](#)

In the quarter ending September 2022, there were 620 applications to the Northern Ireland CMS, a decrease of 20 applications from the previous quarter. The number of applications to the CMS showed a general upward trend from September 2020 to March 2022, but have decreased slightly between March 2022 and September 2022.

In the quarter ending June 2022, 92% of new applications were cleared within 6 weeks. Clearance figures for the reporting period ending September 2022 will be updated in the next publication.

4. Composition of cases on the Child Maintenance Service

Figure 5: The number of cases managed by the Northern Ireland CMS, September 2021 to September 2022



Source: [Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics, Data to September 2022, Table 3](#)

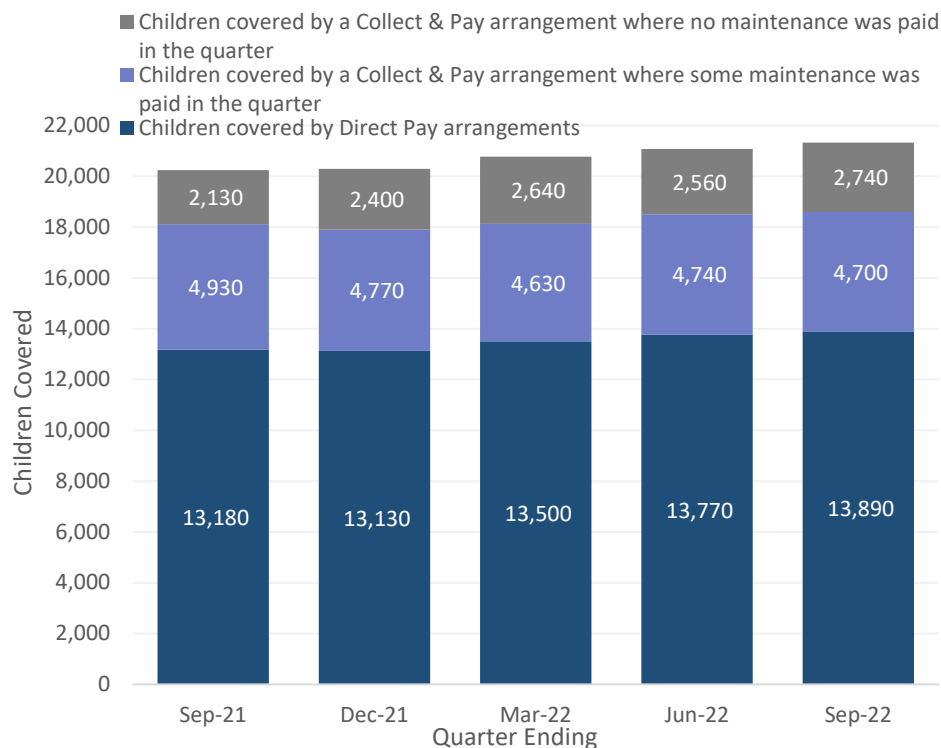
At the end of September 2022, the Northern Ireland CMS was managing **16,350** cases, a 4% increase on the comparable figure at the end of September 2021. Of these cases,

- **9,590** were Direct Pay cases
- **5,680** were Collect & Pay cases
- **900** were Arrears Only cases
- **170** other cases were not yet allocated to a service type (not shown in the chart for presentational purposes)

The number of cases with an on-going liability (excluding Arrears Only cases) managed by CMS has shown an upward trend over the last three years.

5. Children covered by the Child Maintenance Service

Figure 6: Children covered by the Northern Ireland CMS, September 2021 to September 2022



Source: [Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics, Data to September 2022, Table 4](#)

At the end of September 2022, a total of **21,560** children were covered by a CMS arrangement:

- **13,890** children were covered by 9,590 Direct Pay arrangements
- **7,450** children were covered by 5,680 arrangements through the Collect & Pay service
 - **4,700** of these children were covered by Collect & Pay arrangements where the Paying Parent paid some maintenance during the quarter

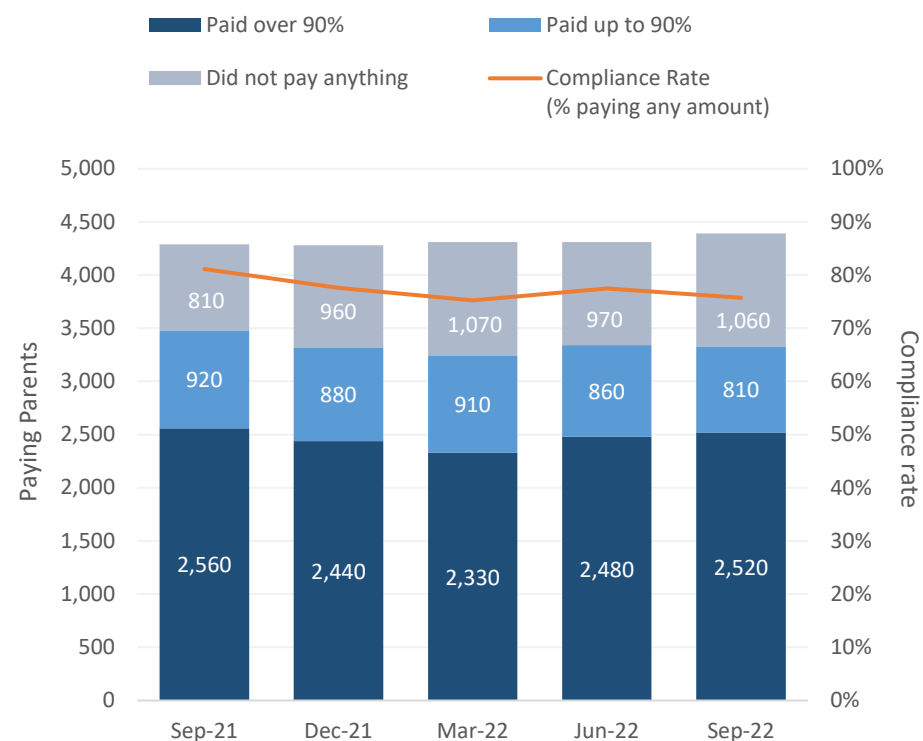
At quarter ending September 2022, almost two-thirds (64%) of all children covered by CMS were covered through Direct Pay arrangements. This has decreased by one percentage point when compared to September 2021. In

September 2022, 22% of children were covered by Collect and Pay arrangements for which some maintenance was paid in the quarter. This proportion has decreased by two percentage points when compared to September 2021.

For presentational reasons, a small number of children, who are covered by arrangements not assigned to a service type, have been excluded from Figure 6. However, the chart includes 99% of children covered for all quarters shown.

6. Paying Parents on the Collect & Pay Service

Figure 7: Compliance rate of Paying Parents through the Collect & Pay service, September 2021 to September 2022



Source: [Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics, Data to September 2022, Table 5](#)

In the quarter ending September 2022, of 4,390 Paying Parents due to pay via the Collect & Pay service:

- 1,060 (24%) paid no maintenance
- 3,320 (76%) paid some maintenance
 - 810 (18%) paid up to 90% of the maintenance due
 - 2,520 (57%) paid over 90% of the maintenance due

The percentage of paying parents paying some of their quarterly liability has decreased by one percentage point since the last quarter, from 77% to 76%. The percentage of paying parents paying more than 90% of the liability due has decreased by one percentage point in this reporting period, from 58% to 57%.

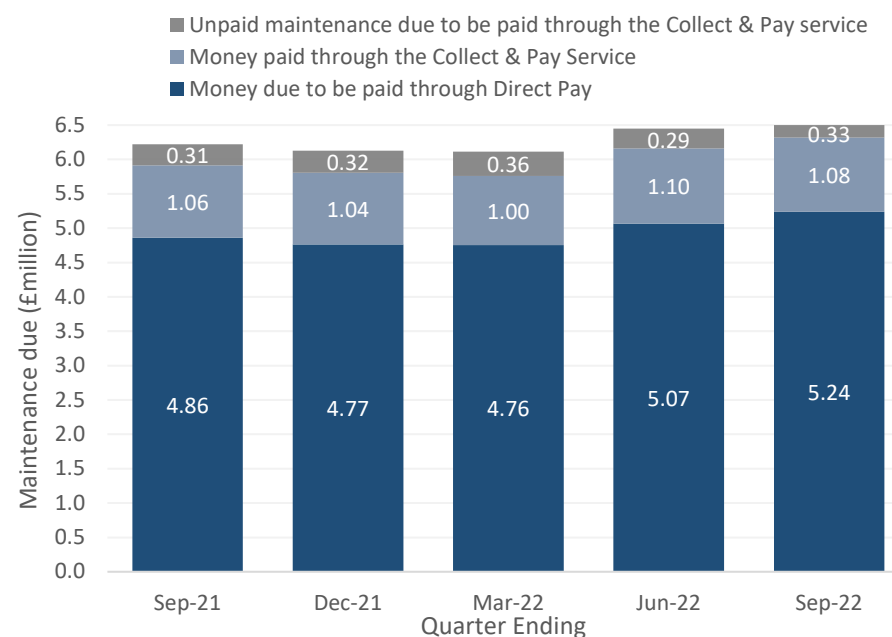
Parents paying over 90% are grouped together because even if a Paying Parent is fully complying with an arrangement, their compliance rate may not be exactly 100%. This is due to differences between how liability accumulates on the CMS 'liability schedule' (used to calculate the amount due) and how collections are scheduled in practice. This group also includes Paying Parents who have paid more than 100% of their liability for the quarter, in order to pay off arrears that they have previously accumulated.

7. Child Maintenance Due and Paid

The CMS monitors payments made through the Collect & Pay service and can take enforcement action where necessary.

If parents using Direct Pay arrangements have maintenance owed, they will have to transfer to Collect & Pay before the CMS can take any action. As a result, the Collect & Pay service contains a subset of Paying Parents who may be less likely to pay.

Figure 8: Child Maintenance due and paid, September 2021 to September 2022



Source: [Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics, Data to September 2022, Table 6](#). Figures have been rounded to the nearest £0.01 million

During the quarter ending September 2022, **£6,655,000** child maintenance was due to be paid:

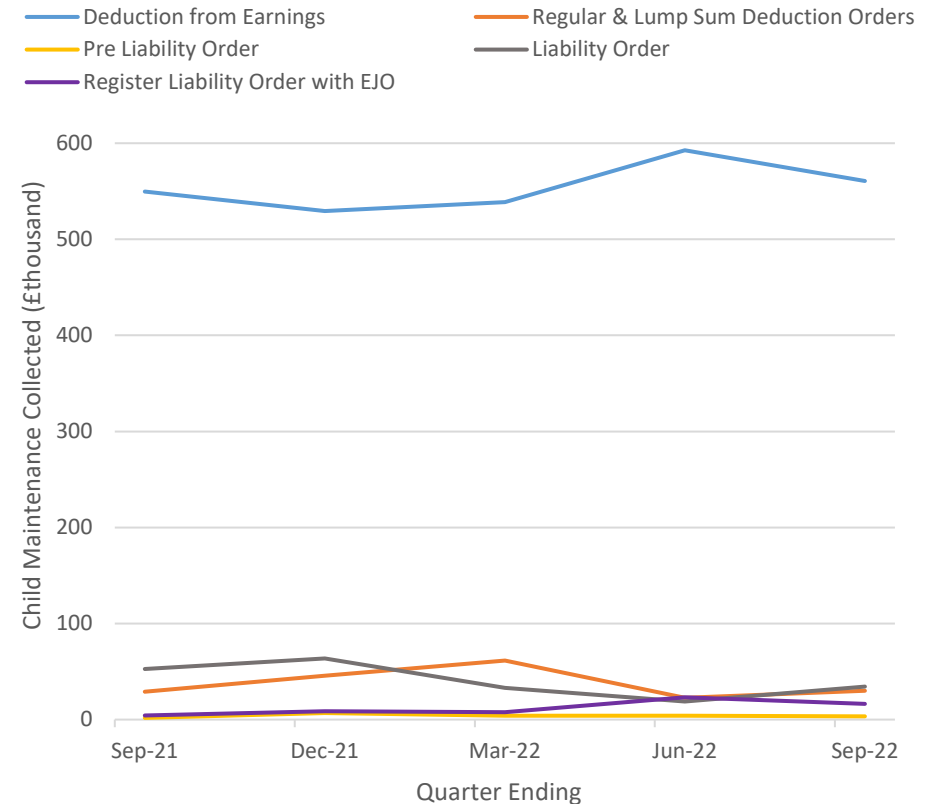
- **£5,239,100** was due to be paid through Direct Pay arrangements
- **£1,415,900** was due to be paid through Collect and Pay arrangements
 - 76% (**£1,081,200**) of the amount due through the Collect & Pay service was paid.

8. Enforcement

When a Paying Parent using the Collect & Pay service does not pay their child maintenance, the CMS can take action to recover the money owed. The CMS can collect unpaid child maintenance in three different ways:

1. Deduction from earnings order or request – the CMS can instruct a Paying Parent’s employer to deduct child maintenance directly from their earnings.
2. Deduction order – the CMS may recover unpaid maintenance from a Paying Parent’s bank or building society account.
3. Civil enforcement actions – a Paying Parent can be taken to court over unpaid maintenance. The courts can grant liability orders, which allow further action to be taken. For example, the case could be referred to the Enforcement of Judgements Office, who can take action to recover any unpaid maintenance and costs. Where the Paying Parent is a homeowner, courts can grant a charging order against the property which would prevent any sale without repayment of the outstanding amount. Ultimately, the court would grant the power to force the sale of the property by an order for sale. If these methods fail, the CMS can apply for the courts to disqualify the parent from driving or to send them to prison.

Figure 9: Enforcement Collections, September 2021 to September 2022



Source: [Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service Statistics, Data to September 2022, Table 7](#)

In the quarter ending September 2022:

- **£560,600** was collected through Deduction from Earnings Orders
- **£34,500** was collected as a result of Liability Order action
- **£30,100** was collected through Regular and Lump Sum Deduction Orders
- **£16,300** was collected following Enforcement of Judgments Office (EJO) referral action
- **£3,300** was collected as a result of Pre Liability Order action

9. About these statistics

Rounding

Figures within this publication have been rounded to the nearest ten, per cent or £100 unless otherwise stated. Percentages are calculated prior to rounding and therefore totals may not add to 100%.

Where to find out more

[Quality and Background Information document](#)

[Supporting data tables](#)

Please send any queries or comments on this publication to:
psu@communities-ni.gov.uk

Definitions

Receiving Parent

The Receiving Parent has the main day-to-day care of the children and receives the child maintenance.

Paying Parent

The Paying Parent does not have the main day-to-day care of the children and pays child maintenance.

Children covered

Children covered is the number of children for whom the Paying Parent has a child maintenance arrangement.

Compliance

This measures how much maintenance has been successfully collected from the Paying Parent compared to the amount of new maintenance arranged via the Collect & Pay service in that three-month period. Note that, if a parent is trying to settle arrears that have previously accumulated, they would need to pay more than the amount of new maintenance arranged during the quarter.