



Voluntary Payments

Voluntary payments are payments made directly to the receiving parent by the paying parent.

A Voluntary Payment is a payment made on or after the initial effective date and before the paying parent has been notified of the maintenance calculation. For payments made after the paying parent has been notified of the maintenance calculation or for arrears only cases which are linked to a case with an on going maintenance calculation, refer to [Direct Non Scheme Payment \(Collect and Pay\)](#). For further information on effective dates, refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance. 

This procedure is carried out by a maintenance service caseworker.

This procedure guides caseworkers through the process of recording a voluntary payment on a paying parent/receiving parent account, this involves contacting both parties by phone or mail to verify that the payment/s have been made and to offset these payments against future liabilities if they equate to more than the paying parent will pay following the maintenance calculation being performed.

It must be stressed to a paying parent if they are going to make voluntary payments they must keep a record of the following:

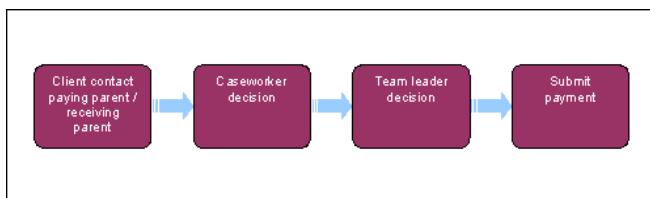
- Date of payment
- Amount of payment
- Method of payment
- Any receipts relating to the payment e.g. bank statements

This helps avoid difficulties when decisions are required about the amount of voluntary payments that have actually been made especially if the paying parent and receiving parent give conflicting evidence.

Collection fees will apply to voluntary payments. The paying parent will need to be made aware that a collection fee will apply for each payment made on or after the initial effective date. Collection fees will not be applied to any voluntary payment amounts the receiving parent receives, (i.e. the receiving parent would not be expected to pay back and collection fee amounts for voluntary payments they have already received). Any collection fees due will be detailed within the paying parent's promise to pay schedule, which will be issued once a maintenance calculation is in place. For further information on collection fees, refer to [Collection Fees Summary](#).

Where voluntary payments are being made, you should advise clients about the benefits of a direct pay service type. For further information refer to [Direct Pay Summary](#).

 Only certain types of payments can be accepted as voluntary payments. For more information refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance 



 When speaking to clients always use the new terminology. For more information refer to [Terminology Changes](#).

 This procedure uses the terms receiving parent and paying parent.

The receiving parent is the parent who receives or who is expected to receive child maintenance, known as the parent with care (PWC) or person with care (PeWC) on the system and in legislation. The paying parent is the parent who pays or who is expected to pay child maintenance, known as the non resident parent (NRP) on the system and in legislation.

 If completing a voluntary payment on a direct pay case, please follow the procedures for [Direct Pay - Overpayment/Underpayment](#).

 Collection fees cannot be satisfied using the below SR - it should only be used where the service type is to remain as to collect and pay. If the service type is direct pay, or a successful unlikely to pay check has been completed, use the **DP Direct Non Scheme** SR. For more information refer to [Direct Pay - Overpayment/Underpayment](#).

 Advise clients that using the Child Maintenance Group's (CMG) collect and pay service will incur collection fees, and that they can avoid these fees by making their own family based arrangement, or by requesting to pay by direct pay. For more information refer to [Collection Fees Summary](#) and [Direct Pay Summary](#).

Client contact paying parent/receiving parent

- When notification is received that a voluntary payment has been made from a paying parent to a receiving parent, check the service type on the case. If the service type is direct pay, for more information refer to [Direct Pay - Overpayment/Underpayment](#). If the service type is collect and pay, create a service request (SR).



Raise the SR using the **NRP** account as it will not progress if raised using the **PWC** account.

- From the drop down list select:

- **Process = Payments**
- **Area = Manage payment**
- **Sub Area = Record voluntary payment**
- **Reason = Voluntary Payment**

Reason code must always be updated prior to updating SR Status to In Progress. The paying parent should always be the source for a voluntary payment SR.

- Update the Status of the SR to **In Progress**. An activity plan is created based on the method of payment.
- Navigate to the **Payments** dropdown list, select the **Payment Allocation** view then select the **New** button within the applet. Select the **NRP** and the relevant **PWC BaNCS account number**.

- Input the reported amount of voluntary payment made in the Amount Paid field.

- Contact the paying parent and receiving parent by phone to verify the payment and amount. If the receiving parent verbally confirms the payment, no further verification is needed. Update the notes field and go to **COC/More Info** tab and update the **Activity plan outcome** field for the **Voluntary Payment confirmed by both parties** as **Yes**, enter your decision in the notes field then go to **Step 10**. If the receiving parent does not agree on the phone, update the **Activity plan outcome** field for the **Voluntary Payment confirmed by both parties** as **No** and issue CMSL2301 to the paying parent to request confirmation/evidence of the payments, then go to **Step 9**.

If contact is made to the paying parent by phone but not the receiving parent, issue CMSL2302 to the receiving parent only, to request confirmation/evidence of payments.

Set the SR **Status** to **Wait** for 14 days.



If all QCs are inactive due to the case status being **Arrears Only** or **Pending Closure** the necessary correspondence will not generate. Issue CMSL2301 and CMSL2302 manually by following the contingency process.

Caseworker decision

- If the paying parent or receiving parent do not respond, or if both do not agree to the voluntary payment, cancel the request and issue CMSL2310 to the paying parent and CMSL2311 to the receiving parent. Update the **Activity Plan Outcome** field for the **Voluntary Payment confirmed by both parties** activity as **No**. Go to **Step 11**.

- When the paying parent and/or the receiving parent respond, update the **Activity Plan Outcome** field for the **Voluntary Payment confirmed by both parties** activity as:

- **Yes** (Both Parties Agree)

or

- **No** (One Party Disagrees)

- Make a decision on whether to process the voluntary payment using the information and evidence provided, e.g. bank statements, receipts. Update the SR **Notes** field with the decision outcome and reason for the decision. For more information on decisions refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance.



Accepting a Voluntary Payment is a discretionary decision, this includes making a Welfare of the Child Decision, for more information on discretionary decisions including a verbatim statement to record in **Notes** refer to Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance

- Issue CMSL2308 – We've made a decision about a payment to the paying parent and CMSL2309 – We've made a decision about a payment to the receiving parent informing them of your decision and how you reached this.



Accepting a Voluntary Payment is a discretionary decision, this includes making a Welfare of the Child Decision, for more information on discretionary decisions including a verbatim statement to record in **Notes** refer to Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance



If you are issuing the above letters after accepting verbal confirmation of the payment, you do not need to set a wait status for a reply, in this scenario go straight to **step 15**.



If all QCs are inactive due to the case status being **Arrears Only** or **Pending Closure** the necessary correspondence will not generate. Issue CMSL2308 and CMSL2309 manually by following the contingency process.

Consequence: If letters are not issued, clients will be unaware of the decisions made.

- Set the SR **Status** to **Wait**, and set a **Wait** period of 14 days.

12. Allow 14 days for a cooling off period. Both parties are given this time to contest the decision and provide further evidence if required. The 14 days is the desirable time for a cooling off period, however, it is discretionary and can be waived if both parties are in agreement.
13. Once the 14 days have passed or a response is received from both parties, set the SR **Status** back to **In Progress**, take the following appropriate action:
 - **Response Received** = adjust the amount, cancel or continue where appropriate
 - **No Response Received** = continue with original decision
14. If the evidence received from the paying parent or receiving parent:
 - Does not change the original decision go to **Step 15**.
 - Does change your original decision, adjust the amount input at **Step 5**.
 - To reject the voluntary payment request go to **Step 22**. Eg, if both parties do not agree or either party has not responded.

For more information on voluntary payments refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance 

15. Within the **Payments** tab, navigate to the **Payment Allocation** view then select **Get Payment Allocation Details** to view the active liabilities the paying parent has on BaNCS for the receiving parent account. Tick the **Select** box next to the liabilities to assign the voluntary payment to then select **Update Siebel**.
16. Assign the voluntary payment amount in the box next to each selected liability until the payment has been cleared, or has covered all of the liabilities, any excess is stored on the system for future liabilities. For more information on the payment hierarchy, please refer to **Payment Hierarchy Summary**.
17. Complete the **Amount Allocated** field next to each payment.

 Check the tasks tab to see if a previous approval task has already been sent. If it has, close and cancel the SR as raising another approval task will cause the SR to go into an error/critical-technical state, requiring an incident to be raised.

18. Send to the TL for authorisation:

- Update the **Resolution code** to **Voluntary Payments Accepted**. This will automatically update the **Status** and **Sub Status** and send it for approval.
- The task appears in the approver's work queue

 To prevent the casegroup moving segments whilst awaiting TL authorisation set the **Lock Assignment Flag**. For more information on how to do this refer to **BOM - Segments Summary**.

Team leader decision

 The TL must review the SR and make a decision on the voluntary payment.

For more information on decision making refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance 

19. After viewing all the information, if you do not agree with the payment:

- Go back to inbox, set the inbox **Status** to **Rejected**
- Complete the **Comments** field for rejection reason
- Return this to the caseworker

20. If you agree with processing the payment:

- Set the inbox **Status** to **Approved**
- Enter reasons for approval
- Return to caseworker

 Ensure that you have checked all of the details of the voluntary payment are correct before completing the approval.

21. When the authorisation request has been processed by the TL record the decision in the **Notes** field on the SR.

Caseworker action

22. When the authorisation request has been processed by the team leader, check whether the SR has returned with the original information populated. If it has not, select the **Query** button above the **PWC BaNCS Account Number** applet then select **Go**, once the details are visible record the decision in the **Notes** field on the SR.

 Once returned by the team leader, do not change SR Status as this will cause TL decision to no longer be visible. Case worker will be unable to re-enter this information and will be unable to progress with this SR.

 If the TL rejects the SR due to caseworker error cancel the SR. Create a new SR and amend any errors you have made and resubmit this for TL approval.

23.  If **Rejected** – Issue clerical letters CMSL2316 to the paying parent and CMSL2317 to the receiving parent informing them of the final decision to reject the voluntary payment request. Both CMSL2316 and CMSL2317 require a team leader (TL) check.
24. Update the SR **Status** to **Closed**.
25.  If **Accepted** – Issue clerical letters CMSL2316 to the paying parent and CMSL2317 to the receiving parent informing them of the final decision to accept the payment and set it off against current and future liabilities. Both CMSL2316 and CMSL2317 require a team leader (TL) check.
Consequence: If letters are not issued, clients will be unaware of the adjustments being completed and that PP could be potentially paying a higher amount than required



Submit payment

 Before continuing check that the selected liabilities have not been satisfied since the SR was generated. If they have, cancel the SR and restart the process selecting new liabilities.

26. If accepted, from the **Payments** tab, **Payment Allocation** view update the **SR** resolution code again to **Voluntary Payment Accepted**.
27. Select **Submit Payment Allocation Details** - BaNCS is updated with the voluntary payment.



Where voluntary payments mean the Paying Parent has overpaid, future Promise to Pay schedules take the overpayment into account and are adjusted automatically by the system. This means that excess voluntary payments are deducted from future ongoing maintenance.

To ensure this has taken place go to the Paying Parent record and select **Financial Accounts**. Drill down on the Financial Account Number and select the Receiving Parent the voluntary payment was paid to. Within the **PWC Balances** applet, the amount should be recorded in the **Excess Payment Amount** field.

28. Update the **Status** to **Closed** and close the SR.
-  Ensure all activities are closed, the SR will not close if any activity remains open.
29. To issue a new P2P schedule create a new SR on the case, from the dropdown select:
 - **Process = CofC**
 - **Area = Change Method Of Payment**
 - **Sub-Area = Change Method Of Payment From**

30. Set the SR to **In Progress** and enter the **Source**, the **Source** is the person who is reporting the change in the **Last Name** and **First Name** fields of the SR, from the **Source** dropdown select their role on the case e.g. NRP or PWC.

31. In the **CoC More Info** tab enter the details of the paying parent in the **Subject Details** field and select **NRP** from the **Subject Type** dropdown.
32. Update the **Resolution Code** to **CoC Accepted**, this generates a **Perform Calc** child SR.

33. From the **Perform Calc** SR, issue letter CMSL4080 to the paying parent and issue CMSL4081 to the receiving parent, the letters have the new P2P information.



If the P2P schedule contains debt not owed to the receiving parent, letter CMSL4081 must be clerically issued.



When the method of payment from is DEO, users should be reminded to input the DEO NDR details again. Contact both clients to confirm that the adjustment has been completed.

34. Once you have completed the letters, close both SR's the following day to allow the letters to be issued, update the **Status** to **Closed** and the **Sub Status** to **Complete**. Ensure all activities are closed as the SR will not close if any activity remains open.

Welfare of the Child

Recording Welfare of Child Consideration: No Negative Impact

A standard form of wording can be used to record the welfare of the child consideration in cases where there is no evidence to suggest that the discretionary decision will have an unduly negative impact on:

- contact between either parent and any child affected by the decision;
- the living standards of any child affected by the decision;
- the relationship between any child affected by the decision and their parent(s) / siblings;
- any other aspect of the child's general health / wellbeing.

In these circumstances, a standard entry can be recorded in Notes as follows:

Please be aware that the children listed below may not relate to or be known to this case participant.

Insert details of the discretionary decision being made (e.g. Decision to impose a DEO)

In making the above decision, I have considered all the available evidence and information, taking into account Section 2 of the Child Support Act 1991 and operational guidance on this issue.

I am satisfied that there is no evidence to suggest the decision being made will have a negative impact on the welfare of (insert names of all children whose welfare has been considered).

For more information on discretionary decisions and recording welfare of the child decisions along with some examples of discretionary decisions refer to Policy Law and Decision Making Guidance. 

Recording Welfare of Child Consideration: Negative Impact Identified

Full details of the welfare of the child consideration must be recorded in all cases where there is evidence to suggest that the discretionary decision being made will have a negative impact on a child that it affects.

The fact that a potentially negative impact has been identified does not mean that a different discretionary decision will necessarily be made, but the reasons for the decision must be recorded as below.

Entries must always start with: **Please be aware that the children listed below may not relate to or be known to this case participant.**

Full details must then be recorded of:

- **the names of the children that have been considered;**
- **the reasons underlying the decision;**
- **the evidence that has been considered; and**
- **the weight that has been given to it.**

For more information on discretionary decisions and recording welfare of the child decisions along with some examples of discretionary decisions refer to Policy Law and Decision Making Guidance. 

CMSL2301 Please confirm a payment has taken place – paying parent

Letter to the paying parent informing them that a direct non scheme payment has taken place.

All fields in this letter are system generated, no manual intervention is required.

CMSL2302 Please confirm a payment has taken place – receiving parent

Checking with receiving parent that they agree that a voluntary payment has been made - amount and allocation. If paying parent & receiving parent cannot agree, this process is stopped and voluntary payment is rejected.

All fields in this letter are system generated, no manual intervention is required.

CMSL2308 Our decision about a child maintenance payment – paying parent

Inform paying parent that a direct non scheme payment has been accepted - amount and allocation - and liability altered.

All fields in this letter are system generated, no manual intervention is required.

CMSL2309 Our decision about a child maintenance payment – receiving parent

Inform receiving parent that a direct non scheme payment has been accepted - amount and allocation.

All fields in this letter are system generated, no manual intervention is required.

CMSL2310 Our decision about a child maintenance payment – paying parent

Inform paying parent that a direct non scheme payment has been rejected.

Under the sub heading 'Our decision about a child maintenance payment' use one of the following:

- If the receiving parent has provided evidence to show they have not had the payment, use the paragraph 'If PWC gives evidence they did not receive this payment'
- If the receiving parent does not agree that the payment was for child maintenance, use the paragraph 'If PWC does not agree that the payment was intended as child maintenance'
- If the receiving parent failed to provide any evidence, use the paragraph 'If NRP did not provide evidence'

Once completed review the letter to ensure the correct information is provided.

CMSL2311 Our decision about a child maintenance payment – receiving parent

Inform receiving parent that a direct payment has been rejected. If rejected, reason will be that the receiving parent does not agree.

Under the sub heading 'Our decision about a child maintenance payment' use one of the following:

- If the receiving parent has provided evidence that they did not receive the payment, use the paragraph 'If PWC gives evidence they did not receive this payment'
- If the receiving parent does not agree that the payment was for child maintenance, use the paragraph 'If PWC does not agree that the payment was intended as child maintenance'
- If the paying parent failed to provide any evidence, use the paragraph 'If NRP did not provide evidence'

Once completed review the letter to ensure the correct information is provided.

CMSL2316 To paying parent – Final voluntary or direct non-scheme payment decision

Inform paying parent that voluntary or direct non-scheme payment has been accepted or rejected – final caseworker decision.

Under the sub heading 'We've made a final decision about a payment' use one of the following from the dropdown:

- If the decision to count the payment as maintenance still stands, use paragraph 'If decision to count payment as maintenance still stands'
- If the decision not to count the payment as maintenance still stands, use paragraph 'If decision NOT to count payment as maintenance still stands'
- If the decision to count the payment as maintenance has changed, use paragraph 'If decision to count payment as maintenance has changed'
- If the decision not to count the payment as maintenance still stands, use paragraph 'If decision not to count payment as maintenance has changed'

Under the sub heading 'What this means for you' use one of the following from the first dropdown:

- If our final decision is that the payment should count, use paragraph 'If our final decision is that the payment should count'
- If our final decision is that the payment should not count, use paragraph 'If our final decision is that the payment should count'

From the second dropdown select the number of children this will affect.

CMSL2317 To receiving parent – Final voluntary or direct non-scheme payment decision

Inform receiving parent that voluntary or direct non-scheme payment has been accepted or rejected – final caseworker decision.

Under the sub heading 'We've made a final decision about a payment' use one of the following from the dropdown:

- If the decision to count the payment as maintenance still stands, use paragraph 'If decision to count payment as maintenance still stands'
- If the decision not to count the payment as maintenance still stands, use paragraph 'If decision NOT to count payment as maintenance still stands'
- If the decision to count the payment as maintenance has changed, use paragraph 'If decision to count payment as maintenance has changed'
- If the decision not to count the payment as maintenance still stands, use paragraph 'If decision not to count payment as maintenance has changed'

Under the sub heading 'What this means for you' use one of the following from the first dropdown:

- If our final decision is that the payment should count, use paragraph 'If our final decision is that the payment should count'
- If our final decision is that the payment should not count, use paragraph 'If our final decision is that the payment should count'

BOM - Segments Summary

Collection Fees Summary

Credit/Debit Card - One Off Payment

Direct Pay Summary

Direct Pay - Overpayment/Underpayment

Direct Non Scheme Payment (Collect and Pay)

Payment - Manually Allocate

Terminology Changes

Third Party - Offset

What types of payments can be accepted as voluntary payments?

- Payments direct to the receiving parent
- To Child Maintenance Group (CMG)
- Paid to a third party