

Application - Fees

The Child Maintenance Scheme (CMS) has introduced charging, including application fees. This is intended to influence parent's choices and encourage families to make decisions in the best interests of their children. Application fees provide a financial incentive for both parties to consider alternative arrangements to the statutory scheme.

All customers contacting the Child Maintenance Group (CMG) must go through the CM Options service first to obtain a CMS reference ID. Clients are encouraged to discuss their options and wherever possible, establish a family based arrangement for child maintenance. Following this conversation, if the client still wishes to apply to the statutory scheme a CMS reference ID number is provided by Options and the client is re-directed to CMG to make an application.

Prior to taking the CMS reference ID, caseworkers must confirm the clients eligibility to make an application and, if a family based arrangement has not been chosen, discuss this option to establish the reason for refusal.

CMS offers two different service types, Direct Pay and Collect and Pay. Direct Pay is where clients manage payments directly between themselves once we've worked out a child maintenance amount. Collect and Pay is where we set up and manage payments for the clients.

If either party has any concerns about setting up Direct Pay with regard to the other party finding out their location, many banks and building societies offer accounts that use a 'central' or 'national' sort code instead of one linked to the local branch where the account was opened. This means that the account details won't give any clue about where the client lives. There are other money transfer services available such as PayPal, MoneyGram, Barclays Pingit. These enable the transfer of money without requiring contact but may charge for their services. Although not appropriate for everybody as this usually requires an email address or telephone number, which could facilitate unwanted contact, this remains a viable option for clients who wish for a simple, auditable way of transferring money. The Child Maintenance Group must not advertise any specific provider of these services.


For more information refer to the [Service Type Guide](#), [Transfer Data Between Clients](#), and the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance 

Once the CMS reference ID is validated on the 2012 System an application fee of £20 is required to progress the application unless the applicant resides in Northern Ireland or falls into one of the exempted categories. These are:

- Applicant is under 19 years old
- Applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence

When the application fee is cleared into the CMG bank account a new child maintenance case is opened. This fee is for the service and is no guarantee an assessment will be made.

When the system identifies that a paying parent already exists on the system. Check if the case/s are active ie have ongoing maintenance or arrears outstanding.

The application fee is normally non refundable except if certain criteria is met. For a refund of an application fee to be considered for reasons other than those stated in the policy, law and decision making guidance, it must be referred to advice and guidance for consideration. For more information on making a refund refer to [Payment - Non Standard](#). For more information refer to Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance. 

For more information on whether the application fee should be returned, refer to procedure [Application Fee Complaints and Returns](#).

Collection fees are introduced to encourage parents to set up family based arrangements and increase collaboration between parents. For more information refer to [Collection Fees Summary](#).

Enforcement charging was introduced to encourage paying parents to pay the correct amount at the right time. For more information on enforcement charging refer to [Civil Enforcement Overview](#).

Clients exempt from paying the application fee begin the application process immediately


For more information on application fees refer to Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance 

To help you cover all the information that you'll need to collect, [Application Receiving Parent Caseworker Checklist](#) and [Application Paying Parent Caseworker Checklist](#) have been developed.



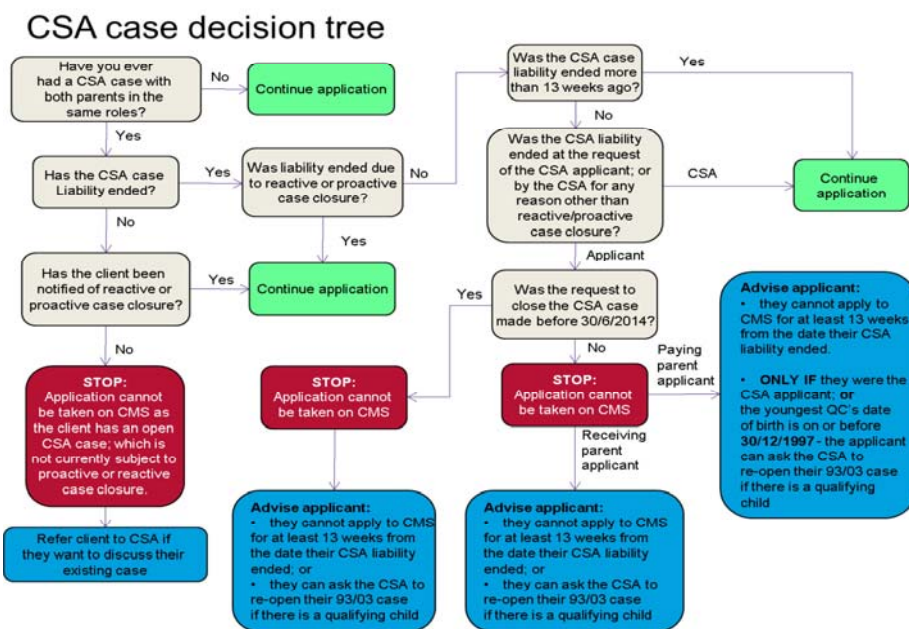
Before collecting information from the client remember they could be going through a difficult time, it is important that your tone is clear, welcoming, helpful and sensitive. Explain how the statutory service works and encourage them to provide as much accurate information as possible.

Check application is valid

1.  Check whether the client is eligible to make an application by asking the client the questions listed below and confirm that the client is aware of the application fee. Failure to complete this can result in ineligible applications and the corresponding fees being incorrectly taken and complaints being made:

Questions	Positive Response	Negative Response
Does the client have an existing 1993/2003 scheme case open, where both parents have the same roles?	Application can't continue - Direct the client to the Child Support Agency (CSA) to discuss closing their existing case.	Go to the next question

 Remember open can include cases that are 'nil' assessed, ensure that the client is aware of this		
<p>Did the client have a 1993/2003 scheme case closed at the request of the applicant within the last 13 weeks?</p>	<p>Application can't continue - Advise the client that they must wait the 13 weeks before making a new application. Refer to CSA decision tree below if the CSA case was with the other parent in the same roles. For more information refer to Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance </p>	<p>Go to the next question</p>
<p>Does the client live within our jurisdiction? (eg lives in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, employed by a British company or a serving member of Her Majesty's armed forces overseas)</p>	<p>Go to the next question</p>	<p>Application may continue - Manage the applicants expectations, although the applicant must be within jurisdiction for the application to continue, we can't prevent the client from applying. A formal habitual residence decision is made during the application process.</p>
<p>Are there any valid maintenance orders for any of the children that have been in place for less than one year?</p>	<p>Application can't continue - Advise the client that the maintenance order can't be superseded until it has been in place for more than one year. For more information refer to Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance </p>	<p>Go to the next question</p>
<p>Is the client under the age of 19?</p>	<p>The client is exempt from paying an application fee. Go to the next question</p>	<p>Go to the next question</p>
<p>Can the minimum information regarding the other party be provided? I.e the title and full name.</p>	<p>Go to the next question</p>	<p>Application can't continue - Without at least the other party's full name, an application can't be completed.</p>
<p>Does the other party live within our jurisdiction? (eg lives in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, employed by a British company or a serving member of Her Majesty's armed forces overseas)</p>	<p>Go to the next question</p>	<p>Application can't continue - The other party must be within our jurisdiction to allow an application to continue</p>



If an applicant continues through the initial application fee process remind them the fee is for our service and is not a guarantee an assessment will be made.

Discuss application/collection fees and enforcement charging

! If a Paying Parent Application, advise the applicant that the Receiving Parent will be contacted to progress the case. If the Receiving Parent does not wish to continue with the application/receive payment, explain that the case will remain open as long as the paying parent wishes to continue with the application and that the paying parent is the only person who can withdraw the case. The paying parent should be advised that should they withdraw the application once the Fee has been paid, we are unable to refund the Fee.

- i** Explain the application/collection fees and enforcement charging, ask the applicant if they have considered a family based arrangement (FBA). Determine the reason an FBA is not appropriate as this may indicate domestic violence. Verbal confirmation from CM Options during the handover conversation is an indication to steer the initial conversation to ask about domestic violence, the applicant themselves must declare that domestic violence has taken place in order to be exempt from the application fee. For more information on domestic violence refer to **Procedural Exceptions**. Applicants residing in Northern Ireland do not pay the application fee.

For more information on exemptions refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance **⚖**
- If the applicant does not want to continue after the introduction of fees and charging has been explained to them ask if they would like to discuss their options further. Offer to transfer them to CM Options but explain they continue to be charged at the 0345 rate, if they call CM Options it is free from landlines, mobile phone rates may vary.
- If the applicant decides to set up a family based arrangement ask if they wish to discuss any details and refer them to CM Options where applicable. For more information refer to [Family Based Arrangement - Record](#).
- If the applicant wishes to continue, advise that there are 2 service types available to them, Direct Pay and Collect & Pay. Direct Pay is where clients manage payments directly between themselves once we've worked out a child maintenance amount. Collect & Pay is where we set up and manage payments for the clients. Collect & Pay is subject to collection charges. For more information on service types, refer to the [Service Type Guide](#).

i Advise the applicant that service types will be discussed in more detail later in the call.

Validate CMS Reference ID

- !** Once the CMS Reference ID has been validated, only the caseworker taking the original call will be able to progress the application until the Application SR has been raised. If the call is ended before the SR has been raised attempt to progress the application to raising the Application SR at **step 11**.
- i** Ask the applicant for the CMS reference ID. This is the 12 digit reference number provided by CM Options, beginning with 95 for cases in England, Wales and Scotland and 96 for cases in Northern Ireland.

If the number is for the wrong jurisdiction, eg a Northern Ireland number when calling CMS Great Britain, re-direct the client to the appropriate office. For guidance refer to the following link: [CSA Contact Numbers for Clients](#).



Do not progress an application where the CMS ID number and residential address is not for the same jurisdiction. When this occurs, direct the applicant to call the relevant organisation to get a new CMS reference ID:

- CM Choices (Northern Ireland): 0800 0287439
- CM Options (England, Wales, Scotland): 0800 988 0988

7. Within the **CMS Validation** view select **New Activity** and enter the number in the **CMS Reference ID** field. Set the **Status** as **In Progress** and update the **Call Retention Type** to **CM Case Related**. Select **Validate CMS ID**; the 2012 system checks the number to ensure it is valid. If valid proceed to **step 9**.
8. If the application is received in written format, the application form is visible on the system. If no CMS reference ID is included call the client and ask them to contact CM Options to obtain a CMS reference ID and call back once they have it. If unable to establish contact via telephone, issue CMSL0077, CMSL0080 and CMSL0010.
9. If the CMS reference ID entered is returned as **not valid**, re-enter the number and select **New** to confirm. If the CMS reference ID is still showing not valid or the applicant does not have one, the application cannot be progressed. Explain to the applicant they must contact CM Options before making an application to the statutory scheme. Offer to transfer the call to CM Options but explain they continue to be charged at the 0345 rate. If they call CM Options from a landline the call is free (mobile phone rates may be charged).

Create Contact And Verify NINO

10. Navigate to the **Contact Details** applet, select **New** and gather the client's first name, surname, date of birth, first line of address and post code. If the applicant is unable to provide the minimum information, advise them the application cannot continue until this information is available. The applicant can apply again once they have the minimum information. Add the client's **gender** when entering the details on to the system, this allows the system to include gender specific text in future letters. All applicant data should be recorded on the system where possible. For information on how names and addresses should be formatted on the system, refer to the Names, Titles and Addresses section of the [2012 System Overview](#) procedure.



If the applicant has an alias record this in the **Known As** field. Confirm with the applicant whether they wish to receive correspondence from CMG using their legal name held on CIS or their **Known As** name.



If the client is requesting to use a correspondence address, gather and record the client's Permanent Residential address and then ensure a CofC is completed once the case is created. For more information on changing an address select the Procedural Exceptions tab.

If the applicant is happy to receive correspondence and for correspondence to be sent to the other party with their legal CIS name, continue with the application as normal. If the applicant wishes their **Known As** name to be used for all correspondence, suppress outbound contact by following [Outbound Contact - Suppress](#) and mark the case as sensitive, refer to [Personal Interest Register](#).

Inform the applicant that although their **Known As** name will be used for all correspondence, should there be need to take legal enforcement action we may be required to use their legal name in any relevant documentation.

11. Save the contact record, any matching records that exist on the 2012 system are displayed in the popup. Select **Pick** or **Ignore** as appropriate.



If the applicant is a paying parent and a match is returned showing the paying parent is already on the 2012 scheme, check if the case/s are active i.e. have ongoing maintenance or arrears outstanding. Case/s that aren't active may mean the case is with Exceptional Cases, before continuing refer to [Exceptional Case Handling](#) in [Procedural Exceptions](#).

12. Select **Go to activity** and create a new **Application** Service Request (SR) as follows:

- **Process = Application**
- **Area = Application**
- **Sub Area = New Application**

Select the SR and update the **Status** and **Sub Status** to **In Progress**.



In a Child in Scotland application make sure the tick box for **Child in Scotland** is checked. For more information refer to [Application - QC/ROC In Existing Case](#). If the Child in Scotland is already a relevant other child (ROC) or a qualifying child (QC) in another case, a warning message is displayed.

13. Select the **Applicant Type** and verify the national insurance number (NINO). Select **Go To CIS** and select the **NINO Verification** tab. Once the NINO is verified go to **step 18**. If the NINO is not verified go to **step 13**.

NINO Not Verified

14. Review the information the applicant has provided and confirm that the information is correct. If a paper application was received contact the applicant if necessary to confirm the detail held. If the applicant states that they are employed or self employed but don't have a NINO set the SR **Status** to **Inactive** and the **Sub-Status** to **Out for further information**.

Inform the applicant that they need to contact the NINO provision contact centre on 0345 600 0643 and to contact us again once a NINO has been issued.

Re-attempt verification by selecting the **CIS/CRA** button. Successful verification will set the **CIS/CRA contact status** to **NINO Verified**. Go to **step 18**.



If the following warning message displays, this indicates a sensitive record: **Unable to progress the enquiry because you have insufficient access**. If a sensitive record is returned as one of many matches for the applicant, update **SR classification** to **Priority** and

set the **Status** to **Pending Assignment**. The SR will move to the special client records team. A one to one match will automatically mark the contact as sensitive and the SR will move to the special client records team. For more information refer to [Sensitive Case - Handle](#).

15. Search for the applicant using a relaxed name search in CIS. Enter the first three letters of the first name and/or surname followed by (*) and re-attempt to verify the NINO (**step 13**).
16. Once all trace attempts are exhausted through CIS, contact the applicant to gather additional information where possible. Change the SR **Sub Status** to **Request More Info**. If unable to contact the applicant by telephone select **Activities** to generate and issue letter CMSL0077 and set a **wait** status of seven days.
17. After seven days check the system for a response, if no response is received issue a second information request, CMSL0080 and wait a further seven days. If further information is provided go back to **step 12** to progress the application.
18. If the NINO cannot be verified the application cannot proceed on the system, the case will be considered for **Exceptional Case Handling**. Set the applicant **NINO Status** to **Not Confirmed**. For more information refer to [Exceptional Case - Gateway \(Including Transition\)](#). Change the SR **Status** to **Inactive** and the **Sub Status** to **Out For Further Info**.

Check For Exemptions

19. Select the SR hyperlink from the threadbar at the top of the screen to return to the **Application** SR. If the applicant is under 19 years old, the 2012 system records the age of the applicant on the day the application was made.
20. If the applicant reveals they have suffered domestic violence but have not reported it, advise them they must report it to a recognised authority for an application fee exemption to be applied to their case. To be eligible for application fee exemption, the incident must have been reported to one of the following organisations listed on [Gov.UK](#). If the applicant wishes to end the call and report domestic violence, the enquiry remains open for 14 days to allow them to report it and continue with the application. Advise them to report the domestic violence and get back to us as soon as possible as the effective date has not been set. If the client makes a verbal declaration of domestic violence and it has been reported to a valid organisation proceed to **step 23**.



The information required is the name of the organisation the domestic violence was reported to. If an applicant provides further details, allow them to share as much information as they want to. It may be appropriate to signpost them to additional services where they can get further help: [Signposting Directory: Domestic Violence](#).

Client does not want to make verbal declaration of domestic violence

21. If the applicant does not want to make a verbal declaration of domestic violence, or is a representative calling on behalf of the applicant issue CMSL1705 to the applicant and make them aware that the letter must be returned within 14 days or the application will automatically close. Update the **Next Action Due Date** field for seven days after issuing the slip so the declaration can be made in writing.
22. If CMSL1705 is not returned after seven days, issue CMSL1706 and update the field for a further 14 days. If it is not returned within the time set, the application is closed. The applicant will need to start the process again including obtaining a new CMS Reference ID number. Update the **Last Date for Receiving DV Slip** field with an additional seven days and add the Reason.
23. Applicants may request an extension to return the form at any time during the 14 day period. Where applicants request this, overtype the **Last Date for Receiving DV Slip** field with the agreed date and add the **Reason** for the extension in the dropdown, within the **Application Charging** applet.

Record domestic violence/special requirements

24. Navigate to the **Application Charging Exemption Details** applet, select and complete the fields, these include:

- **DV declared? = Yes/ No**
- **DV slip issued date = today's date**
- **Last date for receiving DV slip = cut off date for receiving declaration DV reported to organisation**

Application fees are waived if the client states they have reported domestic violence to:

- a local authority
- a legal professional
- a specialist support organisation

Complete the following:

- **DV Start Date = date you accept the information (today's date)**
- **DV Reported to = options include, police, court social services**
- **T&C = DV Accepted/Rejected**
- **DV Accepted = Yes/No**

Select the **Check for Exempt** button.



Do not update the **Exemption Reason** field. This system will automatically populate this field later in the process, if this field is manually populated an incident will have to be raised.





If the client has reported the incident to an organisation not on the list of values, select multi-agency risk assessment conference from the dropdown list. Update the Notes field with the actual organisation.

Enter applicant details

25. Confirm if the applicant has any special requirements such as braille letters or whether they are hard of hearing. To record these select the contact, select the **More Info** tab, **special requirements** icon and update accordingly.

 When adding the special requirements the fields may appear as greyed out and read only, the information can still be entered using the relevant drop downs.

 If the applicant is in the Armed Forces, do not set the **Armed Force** flag indicator in the other information part of the contact screen. Setting this flag can have an impact on the future running of the case.

 If the client specifically asks to be spoken to in Welsh, record in the Contact Notes "Welsh Language Service requested". Suppress outbound contact as all Welsh letters will need to be sent off system, for more information refer to [Outbound Contact - Suppress](#) and [Letters \(Outbound\) - Contingency Summary](#). Email the Welsh Contact List SPOC with the clients details who will add the client to the Welsh Contact List.


26. Select **Check for Exempt** and issue CMSL1707 to all applicants who made a declaration of domestic violence, this letter advises the applicant of the decision made on the declaration. The 2012 system checks whether the applicant fits into any of the application fee exempt categories. If the applicant is exempt continue to **step 30**.

No Exemption - Process Application Fee

27. Explain that the applicant must pay an application fee of £20 for each application within 14 days before the application can proceed. This can be paid over the phone via credit or debit card or by cheque. If paid by credit or debit card the application process continues immediately. Advise the client:

- A separate payment must be made for each application, i.e. a separate cheque or credit/debit card payment. If more than one application is paid for in one payment this will be rejected
- Full payment must be received and cheques cleared within 14 days of the application. If not received or cheques not cleared the enquiry is closed automatically.

If the client asks to pay by instalments this is possible by cheque only, the 14 day deadline still applies for full payment to be received from the date of the application enquiry.

 One extension for late payment may be offered if a valid reason is provided.

28. Within the **Payment details** applet, record how the applicant intends to pay to update the clearance due dates.

- If the applicant asks to pay by cheque, update the **Payment Mode** to reflect this and save the record. Cheques should be made payable to the Child Maintenance Group. The applicant is responsible for ensuring the CMS reference ID is clearly written on the back of each cheque sent to ensure the fee is correctly allocated.

The system automatically sets a due date of 14 days for receipt and clearance of payment. For more information refer to [Admin Account - Assign To](#).

- If the applicant offers to pay by credit or debit card, update the Payment Mode. The system will generate a one off payment child SR. Open the child SR and continue with step 2 of [Credit/Debit Card - One Off Payment](#) to process the payment. Once paid successfully go to **step 30**.



 When processing an Application fee only ever use the ATOS portal for taking a one off credit/debit card payment. Under no circumstances should WorldPay be used.

29. Where a cheque is included with an application form, the system automatically updates the **Status** to **Wait** to allow 14 days for the application fee to be paid. When a cheque payment has been received and has cleared, BaNCS will automatically update the Child SR and close it. At any time within the 14 days **Wait** period, the case worker can manually check the Child SR to verify that the cheque has cleared. If an application form is received without the application fee, no accompanying domestic violence declaration is received and the applicant is not automatically exempt due to age, do not contact the applicant for the application fee. The application forms make clear the responsibilities of applicants.

30. The enquiry will close automatically and CMSL1708 sent to the applicant informing them of the closure of their application if:

- Payment has not been received by the due date
- The value of payments received does not cover the full application fee
- An application does not have a CMS reference ID on the back of cheques

The applicant must begin the process again once the enquiry has closed. If the application fee is received after case closure or partial payment has been received reimburse the money to the payee. For more information refer to [Payment - Non Standard](#). For more information on whether the application fee should be returned, refer to procedure [Application Fee Complaints and Returns](#).

 The application fee is refunded in certain circumstances eg if a case is deselected for case closure after a new application has been processed or where the only qualifying child (QC) dies before a calculation is made. For more information on refunding application fees and death of a qualifying child refer to [Payment - Non Standard](#) and [Death - QC](#). For more information refer to Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance  If a refund for reasons other than the two specified is to be considered, it must be raised to Advice and Guidance for consideration.

31. If the applicant is exempt from paying or, following receipt of a cleared application fee, select **Create Enquiry** and follow the appropriate application procedure:

- [Application - Receiving Parent](#)
- [Application - Paying Parent](#)
- [Application - Child in Scotland](#)



If the applicant paid an application fee the system will issue a receipt once this has cleared.

Northern Ireland exceptions

Application fees do not apply where the applicant resides in Northern Ireland.

CM Options is called CM Choices in Northern Ireland.

CMG is replaced by NICMS in Northern Ireland.

For information about changing and address refer to this link [Change of Address](#)

Domestic Violence questions

If information from CM Options indicates the client is exempt from paying the application fee due to domestic violence, steer the conversation to confirm the exemption. Verbal evidence cannot be taken from Options, the client has to declare the domestic violence to CMS, but confirmation from Options will let you ask these questions directly.

All instances of domestic violence must be dealt with in a sympathetic manner.

If a client has not considered a Family Based Arrangement (FBA), determine the reason as this may indicate domestic violence. **DO NOT** prompt the client but ask careful questions, to determine the reasons why FBA is not appropriate to give the client every opportunity to declare domestic violence as an issue.

If domestic violence is indicated, confirm the client has reported this to a recognised body, if not, signpost them to an appropriate organisation. See link to organisations in details.

Suggest to the client they may want to report the domestic violence as a fee exemption is available if the domestic violence is reported. Advise clients the application can be put on hold for 14 days, in this time they should report the incident and call back advising us which organisation they have reported it to.

Exceptional Case Handling

Go to the Exceptional Case Handling folder and search for the paying parent, if the paying parent is located, contact the Area Advice Centre (AAC) for more guidance.

CMSL0010 Your Child Maintenance Application

Letter to applicant. Send when they do not respond to requests for missing information.

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

CMSL0077 Your Child Maintenance Application

First request for missing information. Suitable for all applicants

- Under the sub heading 'Your child maintenance application'. Complete the free text area to inform the client what further information we require to complete the application.
- All other required information on this letter is automatically completed by the system

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

CMSL0080 Reminder: Your Child Maintenance Application

Letter to applicant, reminding them they still need to provide missing information (this is the second request for information that they will receive).

If the letter is being issued to the applicant, select paragraph TM_40149

If the letter is being issued to the other party, select paragraph TM_40150

CMSL1705 Please Confirm That You Are Applying Without An Application Fee

Applicant DV self declaration form.

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

CMSL1706 Please Confirm That You Are Applying Without An Application Fee (Reminder)

Applicant DV Self Declaration Form

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

[CMSL1707 Our Decision About the Form You Returned](#)

PWC DV self-declaration accept or reject

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

[CMSL1708 We have Closed Your Application](#)

Tell applicant we have closed an application.

Under the heading 'We have closed your application'

- If the client wishes to close the application, select the paragraph 'applicant request'
- If the declaration has not been received, select the paragraph 'DV declaration not received'
- If the declaration has been returned, but not completed correctly, select the paragraph 'Incorrect DV declaration received'
- If the application fee has not been received, select the paragraph 'applicant charge not paid'
- If the client has only paid part of the application fee, select the paragraph 'partial application charge paid'

[CMSF5573 Receiving Parent Contingency Application Template](#)

Form to be completed in situations where the 2012 system is down to allow an application to be recorded and entered on to the system when system functionality is back.

[CMSF5573 - English and Scottish applications](#)

[CMSF5573NI - Northern Ireland applications](#)

[CMSF5574 Paying Parent Contingency Application Template](#)

Form to be completed in situations where the 2012 system is down to allow an application to be recorded and entered on to the system when system functionality is back.

[CMSF5574 - English and Scottish applications](#)

[CMSF5574NI - Northern Ireland applications](#)

[Admin Account - Assign To](#)

[Application - Child In Scotland](#)

[Application Fee Complaints and Returns](#)

[Application - Paying Parent](#)

[Application - Receiving Parent](#)

[Application - QC/ROC In Existing Case](#)

[Admin Account - Add To](#)

[Credit/Debit Card - One Off Payment](#)

[Death - QC](#)

[Direct Pay Summary](#)

[Family Based Arrangement - Record](#)

[Payment - Non Standard](#)

[Sensitive Case - Handle](#)

[Service Type Guide](#)

[Transfer Data Between Clients](#)

[What do I do if the applicant is a CMG employee?](#)

Where the applicant is an employee of the Child Maintenance Group (CMG) and they request to make their case sensitive, all steps in this process must be completed prior to completing [Personal Interest Register](#)

[What is Domestic Violence or Abuse?](#)

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical

- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behaviour

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

This is not a legal definition.