**Department for Work & Pensions**   Procedures ▸ Application Overview

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## Application Overview

The purpose of this summary is to provide a high level overview of the application process which compliments the more detailed procedures linked to the topic.

This process will be completed by caseworkers in the application service and maintenance service. Where there is a linked case, a new application maybe completed by the enforcement service. An application is started when a customer contacts the Child Maintenance Group (CMG) and requests an application for child maintenance with their CMS ID and where necessary pays the application fee. For more information refer to Application - Fees. There are three exemptions from paying the application fee:

- Applicant under 19 years of age or a child in Scotland

- Applicant has been subject to, and reported domestic violence

- Applicants in Northern Ireland

Receiving parents, paying parents and Child in Scotland (CiS) can make applications.

Person with care and CiS applications can be made against one or both parents. This means that two separate applications need to be completed.

Contact can be by telephone or a paper application. An exception to this is where the applicant is a CiS because only telephone applications will be allowed from this type of applicant.

All applications will initially be made through the Gateway (CM Options). CM Options will have a discussion with the applicant about the options available to them and if the applicant decides to have a case with CMG then Gateway will provide the client with a Child Maintenance Service (CMS) Unique Reference Identifier (URI).

When discussing a new application with the customer it is important to be empathetic to their circumstances. You'll need to manage both customers' expectations so that they understand the different ways the CMG can and can't help them. Work with the applicant to capture all relevant information to progress the applications quickly and accurately. Your tone must be clear, helpful and sensitive at all times. Keep customers up to date and informed on the progress of their application.

The caseworker will need to record the CMS reference ID in the relevant field for the application to continue

An applicant can choose between either a direct pay or a collect and pay service type, however there is no guarantee that their choice will be accepted as the other client also has this choice. 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.

The system will use Customer Information System (CIS) to verify address and contact information for the paying parent, receiving parent or person, CiS, QC and relevant other child (ROC). When a paying parent can't be located, Credit Reference Agency (CRA) information and internet searches will be used.

Where either the applicant or non applicant are reported to be a serving member of Her Majesty's (HM) Armed Forces information such as the address has to be recorded in a specific way. For more information refer to Armed Forces Overview

When processing an application, a caseworker may be required to change the information already provided by the applicant. When this happens, depending on the stage the application is at will depend on how you will record the change. If the change is reported before you verify the national insurance number (NINO) you can overwrite the information you have entered, if the NINO has been verified generate the appropriate service request (SR). For more information refer to Changes at Application/New Case.

Information obtained via Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) will be used to retrieve earnings and an employer for the paying parent. The estimated weekly calculation will be based on the paying parents gross taxable income held by HMRC. HMRC - Breakdown of income summary.

During the application process, there are times where you'll need to set a **Wait** on a case but there isn't an SR currently active. When this is the case you are able to raise the **Wait** activity against the activity plan created by the Case sub status. The most likely time is when shared care is disputed whilst running the initial calculation. For more information refer to Shared Care at Application.

There may be a value of **N/A** in the **income source** field due to no income being received from HMRC (or CIS). This could be because HMRC do not hold income details for the paying parent or that the HMRC interface has not worked on the first attempt. You should always re-trigger the HMRC income interface at this stage if no income is held.

Once the estimated child maintenance amount has been calculated the case will automatically move from the application service to the maintenance service. The application is now complete and a new case has been opened on the system.

The system requires that we confirm employment details with HMRC automated system before we can consider a deduction from earnings order (DEO). This system also automatically provides regular employment detail updates and will overwrite any system details that are wrong.

There will be some paying parents for whom HMRC will never return a record as they class them as secure eg HMRC employees or nationally sensitive. In these cases the Sensitive Client Records (SCR) team will need to contact HMRC to obtain earnings/employer information. For more information refer to HMRC - Unmatched Income.

The paying parent will receive a letter showing their provisional calculation and then will be contacted by phone. It will be at this stage that the paying parent will be contacted and can dispute parentage, shared care and provide further information including whether there are any cases involcing children in a family based arrangement (CIFBA).

If the paying parent fails to respond after 14 days following the provisional calculation being issued, defaults will be applied to allow the case to continue.

⚠️ It is very important that when collecting information and before entering it on to the system that you are confident that the information is correct. Any error can have serious complications for clients and entering incorrect information is a breach of the Data Protection Act.

For more information refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance: ⚖️

ℹ️ 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.

| NICMS replaces Child Maintenance Group for Northern Ireland |
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Application - Child in Scotland

Application - Edit Existing

Application - Fees

Application Fee Complaints and Returns

Application - Paying Parent

Application - Receiving Parent

Application - QC/ROC In Existing Case

Armed Forces Overview

Calculation - Initial

Calculation - Provisional

Changes at Application / New Case

Collection Fees Summary

DEO - Self Selected - Set Up

Direct Pay Summary

Exception Case - Gateway

Gather Paying Parent Information

HMRC - Summary of Earned Income

Identify The Non Applicant

Method Of Payment From - Set Up Initial

Method Of Payment To - Set Up Initial

Paying Parent Application - Add Paying Parent Partner

Shared Care Dispute At Application

Security - Set Up

Segment 5 - Compliance Opportunity

Terminology Changes