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## Client Contact Overview

The purpose of this summary is to provide a high level overview of the client contact process which complements the more detailed procedures linked to the topic. These include client security, client representatives, sending and receiving correspondence and communicating with the client in another language.

This process will be completed by any caseworker during the life of a case.

When a customer initially contacts the Child Maintenance Group (CMG) they will be required to set up a seven digit pin number, a password. Every time a client calls in or the CMG calls the client, they will need to provide two numbers from their pin, their special customer password. (see [Security Check](#) procedures).



To help us discuss a case with the client, the [2012 Call Handling Guide](#) can be used for reference.

A client can also nominate a third party to act on their behalf. The representative's information will be recorded on the system and used whenever the representative contacts the CMG.

We have four key promises regarding keeping our clients informed:

1. **Respect our Clients** - We will listen to our client's and treat them fairly and with respect. We will do our best to help them.
2. **Keep our Promises** - We will deal with the client as quickly as we can, explain what to expect and do what we say we will.
3. **Get it Right** - We want client's to have confidence in our decisions. If the outcome is not what the client had hoped for we will explain why and what the client can do next.
4. **Deliver a Quality Service** - By doing all of the above and providing timely responses to phone calls, letters and communications for all stages of the client journey.

These principles should be followed at all times, and our clients should be kept informed even when a procedure doesn't specifically state to call a client. Attempt to call the client as many times as necessary, at all different times of the day. Make maximum use of office mobiles.

Caseworkers are reminded to consider all outbound calls deemed essential when the following action is applicable:

- A change in liability and/or payment schedule
- Gather information
- Complaints/Dissatisfaction
- Change of service type
- Annual review following caseworker decision
- Direct non scheme payments
- Call back request

Caseworkers are not required to make an outbound call unless requested by the client in the following circumstances:

- Change in name
- Change in address
- Change of benefit type
- Change in circumstance is rejected due to failure to provide information from the applicant
- For paying parent only when a DEO has been imposed through non compliance
- Annual review when automated SR's have required caseworker intervention

When multiple change in circumstances have been completed within a 3 day window, a call is required only when the final change has been completed.

The majority of letters will action by caseworkers, for more information refer to [Letters \(Outbound\) - Contingency Summary](#). This includes selecting optional paragraphs or adding in other information that isn't pulled through automatically. Details on how to issue the relevant letters to clients are held within each procedure's **Customer Materials** tab.

If a letter is reissued it will be an exact copy of the original letter with a covering letter detailing this. Where a client requires a letter in large print or braille this option can be selected so that letters are issued in this format.

Any written correspondence received by the CMG will be scanned by the external supplier and uploaded as a PDF file on to the system. This can be viewed at any time by a caseworker. Documents such as birth certificates, court orders/maintenance orders and payslips will be scanned and returned to the sender.

When a request is received from the High Court requesting information, contact Advice and Guidance to discuss the content and to determine the next steps. See procedure: [Advice and Guidance - Create Request](#)

A paying parent, receiving parent or a third party representative will be able to request a statement regarding payments made either to or from the client for a period of time.

In certain circumstances a caseworker can suppress contact to a client when the client, qualifying child (QC) or relevant other child (ROC) has died.

Clients can request a face to face (f2f) meeting to discuss their case where appropriate.


A customer may be more comfortable talking in a language other than English, caseworkers can use the interpretation service to support the discussion. Written contact can be translated through the translation service.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 a client can make a written request for information held against them. Once a Subject Access Request (SAR) has been made in writing the request will be passed to the SAR team who will release the information to the client within 40 calendar days.

There may be instances where clients have lost touch and wish to re-establish contact. Case workers can facilitate this, refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance for further information. 


In any case where it is identified that there is a threat of suicide the caseworker should refer immediately to their team leader who should consider whether referral to the police is necessary.

Every case will need to be judged on its own merit, with controls to ensure the parent is not subjected to any risk, e.g. domestic violence.

For more information on any of these topics, refer to related items or for more information on legislation 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](#).

Caseworkers should also refer to the [Client Experience Guide](#) for more information on communicating with clients and the services we offer.

 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 to replace CMG in Northern Ireland

There is no SAR fee for Northern Ireland

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[Client Representative - Set Up](#)

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[Transfer of Data Between Clients](#)

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[Does the caseworker need to complete security checks when clients make contact by telephone?](#)

Yes, callers will be asked to enter their scheme client identification number (SCIN). This will trigger the caller identification process where will need to provide two digits from their pin, their password and answer two of the seven security questions. The system will generate questions and pin randomly. If a client is unable to do this they will be transferred automatically to the general inbound call handling team more information refer to [Security Check](#).

[If the receiving parent makes contact by telephone, how will the call route to the correct caseworker if the receiving parent has multiple cases?](#)

A receiving parent may have multiple cases held by different areas e.g. maintenance and enforcement. When the receiving parent calls, they enter their SCIN into the IVR. The system will recognise if it relates to multiple cases. The receiving parent will then be asked to enter a date of birth for a QC on the case they wish to discuss and the call will then route to the owning caseworker, team or segment where that case is held. The caseworker will only be able to access detailed information related to the case they are managing, so may need to make call transfers to other areas when detailed information about a different case is required. For more information refer to [Call - Transfer](#).

[Will a third party representative have the same security questions as the client?](#)

No, client representatives will have their own third party reference number (TRN), PIN, special customer password and seven security questions and answers. These will be recorded when they are added to the system. If the third party representative is an employer, they will have their own TRN. Employers will not have a set of security questions, they will be asked questions about their account. For more information refer to [Client Representative - Set Up](#).

[Will a caseworker be able to suppress/withhold automatically generated letters?](#)

Yes, the caseworker can cancel the issue of a system generated letter at any point from the time it is generated to the time it is picked up for batch transmission. The caseworker has until the end of the day to cancel the letter.