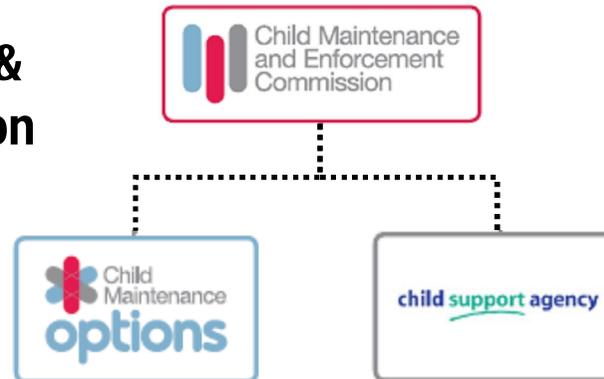




Child Maintenance

- how you can help lone
parents

The Child Maintenance & Enforcement Commission and its delivery arms



The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission is responsible for the child maintenance system in Great Britain.

The Commission's primary objective is to maximise the number of effective child maintenance arrangements.

www.childmaintenance.org
Tel: Press office national helpline 020 7853 8082/83



Child Maintenance Options provides an impartial information and support service to help both parents make an informed choice about child maintenance.

www.cmoptions.org
Tel: 0800 988 0988



The Child Support Agency (CSA) was an executive agency of the Department of Work and Pensions. From 1 November 2008 responsibility for running the CSA transferred to the Commission.

The CSA provides the statutory maintenance service. It calculates and collects child maintenance, ensuring that collected child maintenance is paid to the parent or person who is the main day-to-day carer of the child(ren).

www.csa.gov.uk
Tel: 08457 133 133

1. What is the first thing you think of when you think of child maintenance / child support?
2. What do you think the families you work with think of child maintenance / child support?

Background

- There are around 2.6m separated families in Britain.
- 300,000 separating or newly lone parents annually.
- Most people agree that separated parents have ongoing responsibilities to support their children financially.
- But less than half of the children living with one parent benefit from an effective child maintenance arrangement.



What is child maintenance?

- Regular, reliable financial support that helps towards a child's everyday living costs.
- The parent who does not have main day-to-day care of the child pays it to the parent or person (e.g. a grandparent or guardian) who does.
- It is not a benefit and does not affect any income related benefits received.
- All parents have a responsibility to provide financially for their children, even if they are separated and do not live with the children. Yet this clearly does not happen in every case.



Why is child maintenance important?

- By making a child maintenance arrangement, parents can help their children get the best start in life and give them greater opportunities.
- Even small contributions can make a difference.
- Regular child maintenance arrangements can help budgeting.
- Making an effective child maintenance arrangement may remove one of the barriers to co-parenting that parents face after separation.

How supporting parents on child maintenance issues contributes to your work

- Contributes to NMC standards, the vision for health visiting and Getting It Right for Children & Families.
- There are a wide range of factors that impact on wellbeing of families, including income level and partnership issues, that health visitors assess.
- The steady income of an effective arrangement helps parents to ensure children's wellbeing and optimise life chances.
- Maintenance is a means of supporting vulnerable families; can help prevent children slipping into poverty.
- Identifying those who need further support, raising awareness of how to improve well-being & referring to specialist support.
- Establishing an effective child maintenance arrangement removes one of the possible barriers to co-parenting.

What are the options?

A private agreement between the parents

A statutory arrangement through the Child Support Agency

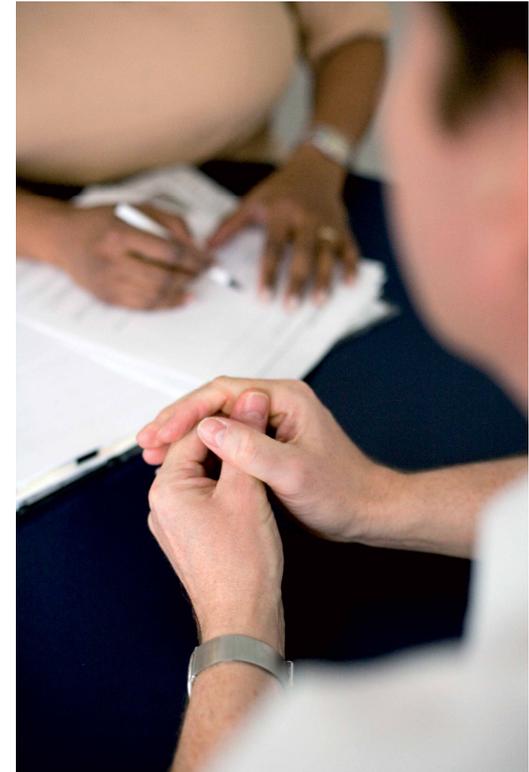
An agreement made through the courts, such as a consent order

- Parents have a range of options when deciding which child maintenance arrangement best suits their circumstances:
- Every family is different: there is no 'one size fits all' solution.

Why would someone be reluctant to arrange child maintenance?

What can health visitors, community practitioners and midwives do?

- Some parents will not be sure what their child maintenance options are, or who they can talk to.
- You are trusted to provide information and guidance. You have great opportunities to help as you may be one of the few professionals some parents see.
- You can remind parents with the day to day care of children that they are entitled to receive child maintenance.
- Parents without the day to day care are often willing to support their children, but are unsure where to get more information and how much they should pay.
- You can provide information that could help make a positive difference to the lives of children, mums and dads. You can help point people in the right direction.



Identify those who may need help

- An expectant parent who is separated
- A parent who is separating or has just separated.
- A separated parent with financial difficulties.
- A separated parent talking about their relationship with their ex.
- A separated parent whose existing child maintenance arrangement isn't working for them.

- It's not just mums, it's dads, friends and relatives too.
- It's parents in new relationships as well.

Where should we direct parents?

- **Child Maintenance Options** provides impartial information and support to help parents select the best option for them.
- Available to family, friends and professionals, as well as parents.
- Available over the phone, on the internet or face-to-face.
- Offers information on wider separation issues in areas linked to child maintenance, such as housing, employment and money.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Child Maintenance Options website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Home', 'What is child maintenance?', 'What are your options?', 'Tools and leaflets', 'Common separation concerns', 'About us', and 'FAQs'. A search bar is located on the right side. Below the navigation, there is a large red banner with the text 'What are your options?' and 'Find out about your maintenance options and making the arrangements best suited to your circumstances'. To the left of the banner, there is a 'Tools & leaflets' section with links for 'Maintenance calculator', 'Private agreement form', 'Leaflets and guides', and 'Benefits table'. To the right of the banner, there are three featured articles: 'What is child maintenance?', 'Child maintenance has changed', and 'Grandparents' Guide'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Contact us' section with the phone number '0800 988 0988' and operating hours: 'Lines are open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm Saturday.'

Child Maintenance Options
0800 988 0988
Lines are open from 8am to 8pm
Monday to Friday and 9am to
4pm Saturday.

Where can I get more information?

- Call Child Maintenance Options on 0800 988 0988 or visit www.cmoptions.org.
- Download or order any of the leaflets available:

Help with making choices about child maintenance:



Your child maintenance options Private agreement form

About the Child Maintenance Options service:



Our complaints process How we handle your data

Practical information on the issues that you may face when parenting apart:



Your rights and responsibilities You and your child's wellbeing Housing rights and options How to deal with your finances Managing work and parenting

Questions?

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Stakeholder Groups Manager

Child Maintenance & Enforcement Commission

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