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## Child Maintenance Service

# Annual Report on Decision Making

1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE



# **Annual Report on Decision Making**

in the

## **Child Maintenance Service**

1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Article 76 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 by the Department for Communities

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# Foreword by the Chairperson of The Standards Committee

## Introduction

The joint Standards Committee for Northern Ireland was established in 1999. The background to the creation of the Committee is set out in Appendix 7 of this report. Put briefly, the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order transferred responsibility for monitoring the standard of decisions against which there is right of appeal from the Chief Adjudication Officer to the Department. This responsibility was then delegated to the Chief Executives of the Social Security Agency (the Agency) and the Child Support Agency which subsequently became the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) within the Department for Social Development. This rearrangement of responsibilities followed similar changes in GB where concerns had been raised with regard to the credibility of arrangements whereby those responsible for service delivery would also be monitoring the standard of the service provided. To address these issues the Westminster government provided assurances that further measures would be taken to insert an element of independence into the oversight of the quality of decision making with regard to both social security and child support. As a result, in Northern Ireland the joint Standards Committee was established with an independent Chair and two independent members. The full membership of the Committee is set out on page 31 of the report.

Appendix 7 also sets out the fairly broad terms of reference of the Committee. First and foremost, the Committee has the task of providing assurance that the arrangements in place within the Agency and CMS to monitor decision making are effective and robust. Secondly, we are required to monitor and report on the standard of decision making. Following from this, we are required to highlight areas of weakness, make recommendations for improvement and report on the impact of measures taken to raise standards. Thirdly, we are required to provide assurance with regard to the mechanisms in place to feed back the results of monitoring and thus promote continuous improvement.

The Committee seeks to discharge its responsibilities via three layers of inquiry. The quarterly reports produced by the Case Monitoring Team within CMS, which set out the most recent data on performance, are considered in detail by the full Committee at its quarterly meetings and there is on-going discussion of the methodology employed by the CMT. Additionally, there are formal and, where required, informal meetings with the staff of CMS to enable the Committee to secure a full understanding of the work of CMS and matters which may affect decision making performance. Thirdly, we seek additional feedback on the standard of the service provided through discussions with, for example, the voluntary advice sector and the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO). Further detail on performance is provided in the following paragraphs, but I am pleased

to provide assurance, at the outset, that the arrangements in place to monitor decision making are robust and note that this conclusion is supported by the work of the NIAO. I would, therefore, wish to commend the staff of the CMT for the rigour and quality of their work and the contribution they make to driving up standards in what is a very important service in our society. Whilst there is some room for improvement, I can confirm that the quality of decision making has improved and is generally of a high standard. I can also provide assurance that, as para 3.10 of the report indicates, arrangements are in place to facilitate feedback and continuous improvement.

### Decision making performance in 2015/6

The methodology employed by the CMT to check performance is set out in chapter 3 of the report. This indicates that, on the advice of statisticians, a total of 991 cases were selected for checking in 2015/6. Two issues require particular comment. First, the complexity of the task of monitoring and, indeed, the work of CMS generally, is evident from the fact that these 991 cases related to three different schemes for assessing the liability of Paying Parents. The 1993 scheme, introduced under the 1991 Child Support (Northern Ireland) was a recipe for error by virtue of its complexity. It was hoped that this difficulty would be resolved by the simplified scheme provided for under the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act (NI) 2000-the 2003 scheme. However, the new scheme was bedevilled by IT difficulties. As a result, it was not possible to move old cases across and two caseloads had to be managed. A third scheme was subsequently developed –CMS 2012. This appears to be working well and, as I discuss below, will form the basis for the new arrangements which will be fully operational from 2018.

The second issue evident in chapter 3 is the rigour and breadth of the monitoring of decisions by the CMT. Put briefly, performance is assessed using three main yardsticks. The first is the cash value accuracy of the most recent decision with regard to the assessment of maintenance. The second relates to the quality of the decision being checked. This is assessed using five criteria: for example, the correct application of the law. The third yardstick focuses on the collection service provided by CMS and the correctness of accounts where, in cases sampled for maintenance calculation accuracy, the most recent decision results in a change in liability.

Chapter 5 of the report sets out the monitoring results for the 1993 scheme. It can be seen that 99% of the decisions checked were found to be cash value accurate. The decision making accuracy rate was 90% and the accuracy rate for operational accounts was 97%. The figure for decision making represents a dip in performance from last year but overall this is a good performance given the difficulties with this scheme discussed above. As chapter 4 indicates, 95% of the decisions

monitored for the 2003 scheme were found to be cash value accurate. The accuracy rates for decision making and operational accounts were 97% and 99% respectively. These are very good results. Finally, for the 2012 scheme, cash value accuracy was 93% and decision making accuracy 99%. There is clearly some room for improvement with regard to cash value accuracy but two issues should be borne in mind in assessing performance. First, for various reasons, a rising proportion of the work of CMS relates to complex cases and the data above does not, perhaps, fully capture the effort required to reach and maintain the standards achieved. Secondly, there is the impact of external forces: most obviously recent changes in the labour market. Appendix 5 indicates that for the 2012 scheme a major source of error relates to earnings. Income assessment is clearly more difficult when new forms of employment, most obviously, zero hours contracts, are emerging.

## The broader context

CMS has made significant progress on a number of fronts this year. Compliance now stands at 90%, costs per case have been reduced and the number of non-paying cases under the 1993 scheme has been cut by one third. Appendix 9 provides examples of the use of enforcement powers by CMS and the gains to Receiving Parents that may accrue. Arching over all of this is the transformation of the service which is due to be completed in 2018. The new structure has three distinct features. Firstly, there is the provision of impartial information, available to all separating parents, on the options available with regard to child support. Secondly, the options available are family based arrangements with no further CMS involvement, Direct Payments where CMS calculate the entitlement of the Receiving Parent but couples decide for themselves how this will be paid and access to the collection, payment and enforcement service provided by CMS. It should be noted that Receiving Parents can move between these options. Thirdly, the 1993 and 2003 schemes are being closed down with parents being advised of the suite of options listed above which operate within the framework of the 2012 scheme. This will bring an end to years of confusing and, to many, incomprehensible arrangements and is a major step forward. As I noted in my foreword last year, the Ministerial decision that application fees would not be introduced in Northern Ireland is a helpful element in building this new approach. From our discussions with staff this year, it would appear that good progress is being made to complete this major project on time and we commend staff for the effort and commitment they have brought to this important work.

## Conclusion

I am pleased to be able to present a positive assessment of the work and progress of CMS this year. I am grateful to the staff for their comprehensive presentations and responses to issues raised by the Committee. I would also wish to thank my colleagues on the Committee for their contributions. This year Laura McPolin stepped down having completed 8 years of service to the Committee. We thank her and wish her well for the future. Our new independent member is Ursula O Hare and I have no doubt that the Committee will gain much from the expertise she will bring to our work.

*Eileen Evason*

**Professor Eileen Evason**  
**Chairperson of Standards Committee**

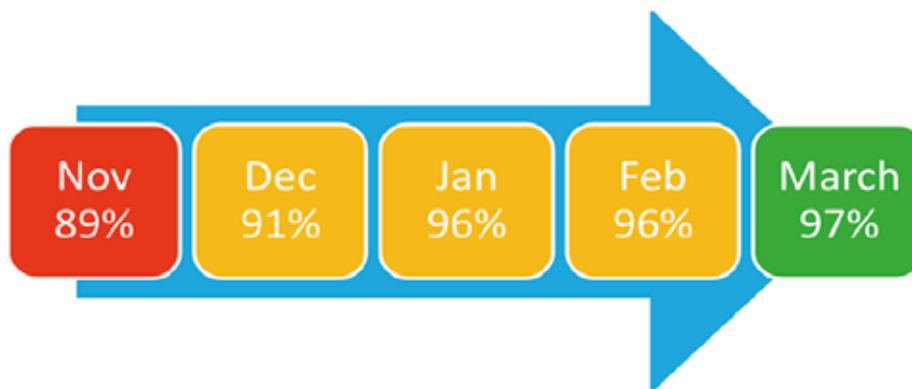


## Introduction by **The Director of CMS**

It has been another challenging year for our people as they continue to develop their understanding of our new (2012) Statutory Scheme, whilst continuing to move our legacy schemes (1993 and 2003) to closure.

During the year we saw steady progress in the quality of decision making on our new scheme. Whilst we did not average out performance to meet our accuracy target across the year, I am reassured that month by month we saw improvements that helped us achieve the target (in-month) by March 2016. The challenge now in the year ahead is to sustain this.

### **CVA In Month Improvement**

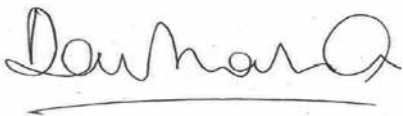


Getting the case right, first time every time will be our aspiration once we complete our Reform Programme in 2018. At this stage we will manage all our cases on the one system and this will undoubtedly help improve what we do. However until then we need to manage all 3 statutory schemes and ensure the really good progress made improving accuracy is maintained. We have invested significantly in recent years to make sure our people are thoroughly trained and focussed on delivering for all our clients. That is why I am thrilled at the record level of maintenance we collected or arranged (£23.7m) this year, despite the challenge of delivering this across 3 schemes. I am also pleased to note nearly 65% of our 2012 scheme clients are avoiding collections charges by using our direct pay facility.

Our colleagues in the Case Monitoring Team provided immense support to our operational managers via advice and guidance while independently monitoring cash value accuracy and decision making. It is important to note that both Internal Audit and the Northern Ireland Audit office have commended CMT for the excellent quality of their work and also the assistance they provided to them during the year.

As always my team and I are indebted to the support and challenge the Standards Committee provide us every month. There can be few people who know our business as well as Professor Evason, Kevin Higgins and Laura McPolin. This knowledge and understanding is the real key to monitoring performance and identifying areas for improvement. It also provides me independent and expert re-assurance to validate the internal reports my own teams produce.

As Laura steps down from the Committee after 8 years of dedicated service, I pass on my thanks and best wishes for the future. It also allows me to welcome Ursula O'Hare as our new Standard Committee member and from our initial meeting it is clear Ursula brings that sense of rigour and expertise needed to carry on this invaluable work alongside Eileen and Kevin.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Malcolm". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

**DAVID MALCOLM**  
**Director, Child Maintenance Service**

# 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides assurance to the Director of CMS that effective monitoring procedures are in place and that monitoring accurately reflects the standard of decision making within CMS.
- 1.2 The Balanced Scorecard target for the 2015/2016 monitoring year is to achieve a cash value accuracy level of 97% for the 1993 Child Support Scheme and 2003 Child Support Scheme combined. A target of 97% cash value accuracy has also been set for the CM2012 scheme. The target focuses upon the accuracy of the last decision and is decided by the examination of the pre-determined statistically valid last decision to be cash value accurate to the nearest pound.

## BALANCED SCORECARD

- 1.3 The combined 1993 and 2003 schemes cash value accuracy figure achieved for this monitoring year was 96%.

Balanced Scorecard Target	Percentage Accurate	Percentage Inaccurate
97%	96%	4%

- 1.4 The CM2012 scheme cash value accuracy figure achieved for this monitoring year was 93%.

Balanced Scorecard Target	Percentage Accurate	Percentage Inaccurate
97%	93%	7%

## 2. Decision Making Process

- 2.1 Decision makers calculate the amount of maintenance based on the Child Support legislation – Child Support (NI) Order 1991 and Child Support, Pensions, Social Security Act (NI) 2000, Decision makers are required to consider evidence provided by the Receiving Parent and the Paying Parent to establish the amount of maintenance required to maintain the qualifying children.
- 2.2 Decision makers are required to obtain and document sufficient evidence to support their decisions. It is essential that all avenues be explored to ensure that every aspect of the decision has been investigated. In the majority of cases this information is then processed by Siebel which supports the CM2012 scheme, Child Support 2 (CS2) which is the computer system that supports the 2003 child maintenance scheme and by the Child Support Computer System (CSCS) which is the computer system that supports the 1993 child maintenance scheme. These systems are used to calculate maintenance calculations.
- 2.3 When an initial maintenance calculation has been made the decision maker can reconsider their decision by way of supersession to take account of a change of circumstance or a revision to correct an error.
- 2.4 Child Maintenance Service also provides a collection service in addition to the assessment service. The decision maker uses Siebel, CS2 and CSCS to set up accounts and payment schedules. These schedules take into account the Paying Parent's current liability as well as any underpayment or overpayment as a result of the new assessment. Cases are monitored separately on the financial accuracy of this service and results are also reported, but these checks do not impact on the cash value accuracy of decision-making.

## 3. Assurance

- 3.1 The number of cases randomly selected during the 2015/2016 monitoring year was 991 cases. Of these 115 were from the 2003 Scheme, 86 from the 1993 Scheme and 790 from the CM2012 scheme. These figures are based on a formula drawn up by the Department's statisticians. Please note that due to the case closure programme CMT were only able to select 186 1993 scheme, cases a shortfall of 15 cases.
- 3.2 For 1993 and 2003 schemes the monitoring quota is based upon a confidence level of 95% with a tolerance level of +/- 2.45%. This means that the actual cash value error rate could be up to 2.45% greater or less than the error rate found by the case monitors. For the CM2012 scheme the monitoring quota is based upon a confidence level of 95% with a tolerance level of +/- 1.25%. This means that the actual cash value error rate could be up to 1.25% greater or less than the error rate found by the case monitors.
- 3.3 As a result of a Northern Ireland Audit Office requirement, the volume of CS2 checks in this financial year include 20 wholly clerical cases that are maintained by a clerical team in Bolton. These cases are checked by GB Client & Process Assurance team who then provide the NI Case Monitoring Team with the assurance. These cases feed into the NI Child Maintenance Service's cash value accuracy figures.
- 3.4 All cases selected by CMT for assurance are selected via scans that are provided to CMT by third parties (Analytical Service Unit and Business Analytics Unit). A random selection process is then used to ensure that all cases have an equal chance of being selected.
- 3.6 Using these scans provides a robust and independent assurance on the selection process.
- 3.7 The types of decisions selected for all schemes are decisions where maintenance assessments have been completed and decisions not to assess where the tolerance level was not broken. These are:
- Initial maintenance calculations;
  - Supersessions;
  - Revisions;
  - Annual reviews;
  - Interim Maintenance Assessments (CSCS);
  - Default Maintenance Decisions (CS2);
  - Maintenance assessments with interim effective dates (CSCS);
  - Decision not to assess where the tolerance level was not broken;
  - Variations; and
  - Departures.

- 3.8 The same sample of decisions is also monitored from an operational accounts perspective (1993 and 2003 scheme), where the maintenance assessment requires operational accounts action. However decisions on operational accounts do not feed into the cash value accuracy target as these are part of the collection process.
- 3.9 Decisions are monitored against 3 main criteria:
- Last decision cash value accuracy to provide independent assurance that decisions made are accurate in line with the requirements in Child Maintenance Service (CMS) Balanced Scorecard;
  - Operational accounts accuracy to ensure accounts reflect the current liability; and
  - Assurance on the quality of the decision making process.
- 3.10 The findings of the Case Monitoring Team also form the basis of monthly reports to the Divisional Management Team and operational managers. These reports detail performance against the Balanced Scorecard target, providing an analysis of results and identifying any trends and issues.

## 4. Monitoring Findings for 2003 Scheme

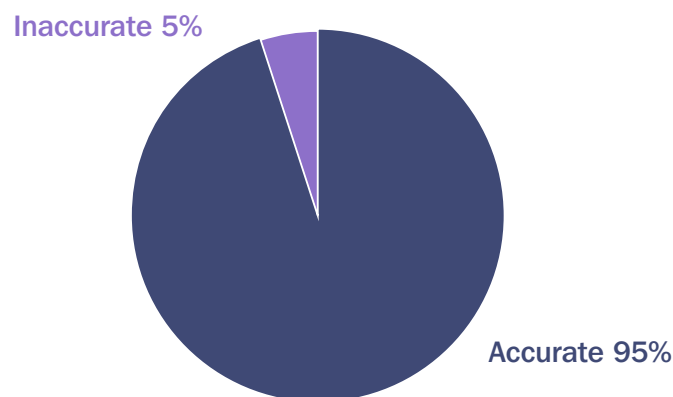
4.1 The Case Monitoring Team's findings for CS2 maintenance calculations and operational accounts are presented in this part of the report.

### CS2 Maintenance Calculation

#### Cash Value Accuracy

4.2 Between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016, there were 115 Maintenance Calculation decisions checked. There were 109 decisions found to be cash value accurate (95%) and 6 were cash value inaccurate (5%). The main errors affecting cash value accuracy were the incorrect use of income.

- **Appendix 1:** Shows an analysis of decision making errors in the decision making process that did not necessarily impact on the cash value accuracy of the Outcome Maintenance Calculation Decision.
- **Appendix 2:** Shows a comparison of cash value accuracy for the last 3 years.



## Decision Making Accuracy

4.3 The same sample of 115 Maintenance Calculation decisions were also monitored for decision making accuracy. Where a case is found to have decision making errors, it does not necessarily impact on the cash value accuracy of the outcome decision. CMT staff raise decision making comments in the following categories. During this reporting year it was decided to focus on a different area of the decision making process each quarter:

- There is insufficient evidence to support the decision;
- The incorrect law is applied, or the law is applied incorrectly;
- The decision maker makes a wrong finding of fact;
- There is an incorrect calculation; and
- The record of decision/notification is incomplete or inaccurate.

Of the 115 decisions monitored, 112 were found to be decision making accurate (97%) and 3 were found to have decision making errors (3%). The main errors were regarding effective dates and income.

- **Appendix 2:** shows a comparison of decision making accuracy for the last 3 years.

## Insufficient Evidence

4.4 Insufficient evidence accounted for 15% of decision making process comments this year. An insufficient evidence comment is made when the decision maker has failed to show that they fully investigated and/or recorded how they reached their decision.

4.5 During this monitoring year 17 insufficient evidence comments were made. The main comments related to calculation of income.

- **Appendix 1:** provides an analysis of the errors found under the insufficient evidence category.

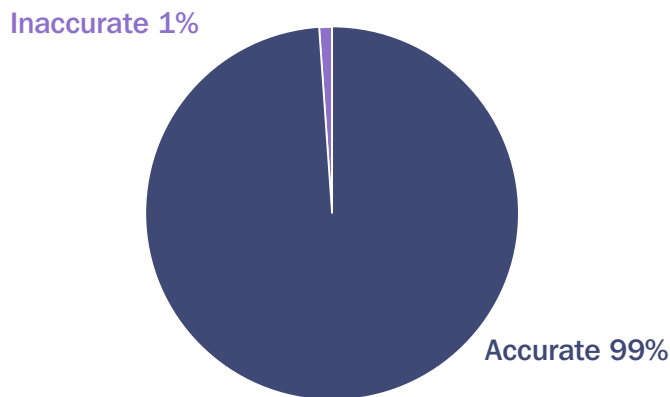


## CS2 OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTS

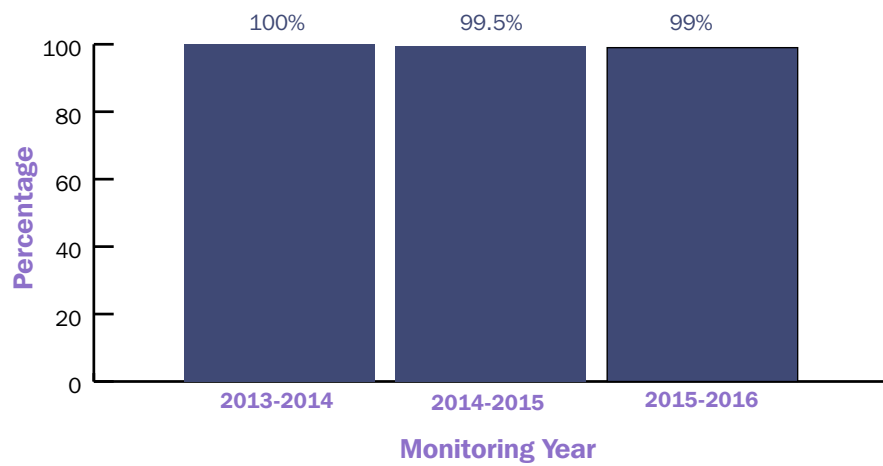
- 4.6 Although not used to measure the Balanced Scorecard accuracy target, the Case Monitoring Team also examines operational accounts accuracy as this provides assurance on the financial accuracy of the collection service provided by CMS.
- 4.7 The decision maker uses CS2 or CSCS to set up accounts and payment schedules. These schedules take into account the Paying Parent’s current liability as well as any underpayment or overpayment as a result of the new assessment.
- 4.8 Decisions selected for monitoring of Maintenance Calculation decisions also have their operational accounts monitored. However where the Maintenance Calculation decision does not result in a new or revised liability there is no requirement to monitor operational accounts. Consequently the number of operational accounts decisions monitored is less than the number of Maintenance Calculation decisions monitored.

## Financial Accuracy

- 4.9 From 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 the Case Monitoring Team monitored 71 operational accounts decisions. Of these, 70 were found to be financially accurate (99%).



**COMPARISON OF OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTS CASH VALUE ACCURACY 1 APRIL 2013 – 31 MARCH 2016**



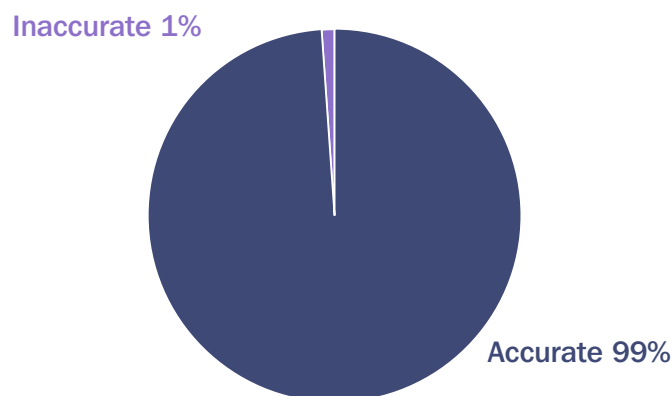
## 5. Monitoring Findings for 1993 Scheme

5.1 The Case Monitoring Team's findings for CSCS Maintenance Assessments and operational accounts are presented in this part of the report.

### CSCS MAINTENANCE ASSESSMENTS

#### Cash Value Accuracy

5.2 Between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 the Case Monitoring Team monitored 71 Maintenance Assessment decisions. The monitoring found that 70 were cash value accurate (99%) and 1 was cash value inaccurate (1%). The error affecting cash value accuracy was incorrect exempt income. An analysis of Maintenance Assessment errors is found in Appendix 3. Appendix 4 shows a comparison of cash value accuracy for the last 3 years.



#### Decision Making Accuracy

5.3 The same sample of 71 Maintenance Assessment decisions was also monitored for decision making accuracy. Where a case is found to have inaccurate decision making, it does not necessarily follow that the last decision is cash value inaccurate. The Case Monitors examine a decision, making comment under the following categories:

- There is insufficient evidence to support the decision;
- The incorrect law is applied, or the law is applied incorrectly;

- The decision maker makes a wrong finding of fact;
- There is an incorrect calculation; and
- The record of decision/notification is incomplete or inaccurate.

5.4 Of the 71 decisions monitored, 64 were found to be decision making accurate (90%) and 7 were found to have decision making errors (10%). The main errors were regarding calculation of income.

- **Appendix 3** provides an analysis of all decision making comments.
- **Appendix 4** shows a comparison of decision making accuracy for the last 3 years.

### Insufficient Evidence

5.5 Insufficient evidence accounted for 22% of decision making comments this year. An insufficient evidence comment is made when the decision maker has failed to show that they have fully investigated and recorded evidence used or recorded their decision correctly.

5.6 During this monitoring year 16 insufficient evidence comments were raised. The main comments related to income. An analysis of the errors found under the insufficient evidence category is contained in Appendix 3.

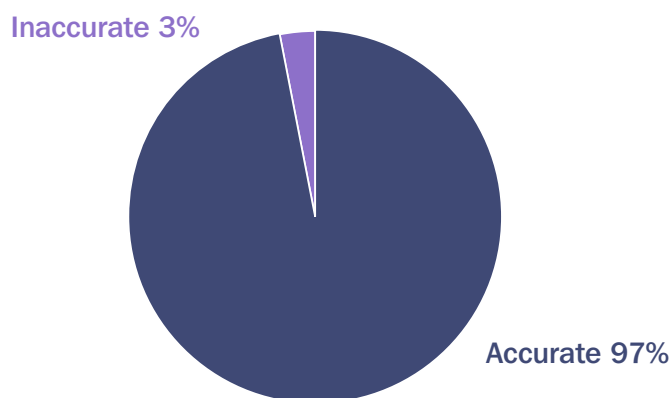
## OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTS

5.7 Although not used to measure the Balanced Scorecard target, the Case Monitoring Team also examines operational accounts performance.

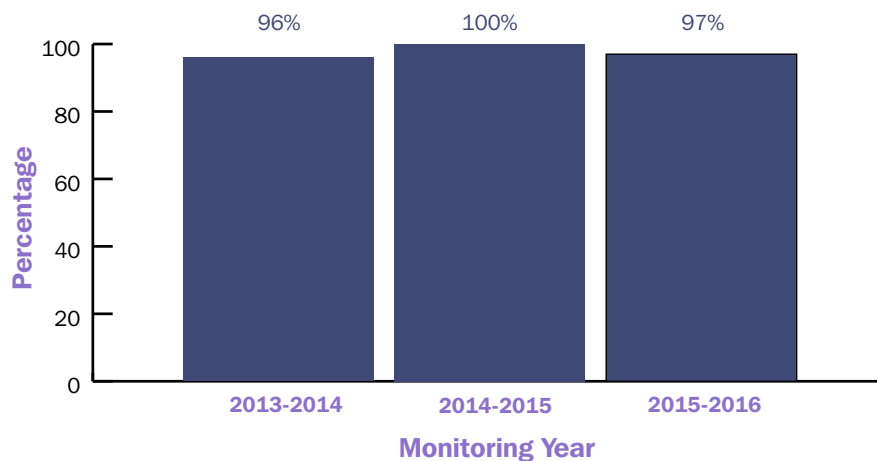
5.8 Decisions selected to monitor Maintenance Assessment decisions also have their operational accounts monitored. However, where the Maintenance Assessment decision does not result in a new or revised liability, it is not necessary to monitor operational accounts. Consequently, the number of operational accounts decisions monitored is less than the number of Maintenance Assessment decisions monitored.

### Financial Accuracy

5.9 From 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 the Case Monitoring Team monitored 33 operational accounts decisions. Of these, 32 were found to be financially accurate giving an accuracy performance of 97%.



#### COMPARISON OF OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTS CASH VALUE ACCURACY 1 APRIL 2013 – 31 MARCH 2016



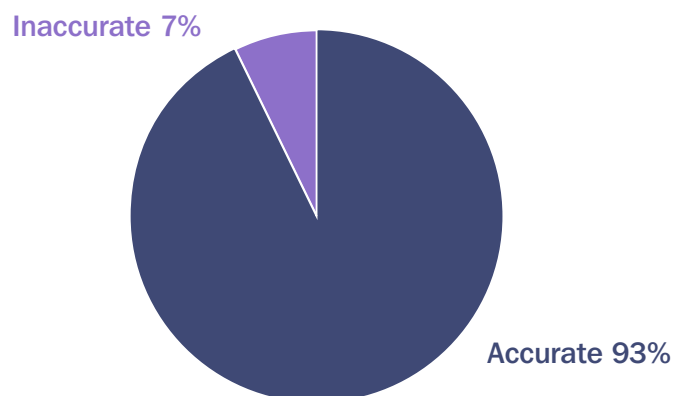
## 6. Monitoring Findings for CM2012 Scheme

6.1 The Case Monitoring Team's findings for CM2012 Maintenance Calculations and operational accounts are presented in this part of the report.

### CM2012 MAINTENANCE CALCULATIONS

#### Cash Value Accuracy

6.2 Between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 the Case Monitoring Team monitored 790 CM2012 Maintenance Calculation decisions. The monitoring found that 735 were cash value accurate (93%) and 55 were cash value inaccurate (7%). The main errors affecting cash value accuracy were incorrect effective dates and income. An analysis of Maintenance Calculation errors is found in Appendix 5.



## Decision Making Accuracy

- 6.3 The same sample of 790 Maintenance Calculation decisions were also monitored for decision making accuracy. Where a case is found to have inaccurate decision making, it does not necessarily follow that the last decision is cash value inaccurate. The case monitors raise a decision making comment under the following categories:
- There is insufficient evidence to support the decision;
  - The incorrect law is applied, or the law is applied incorrectly;
  - The decision maker makes a wrong finding of fact;
  - There is an incorrect calculation; and
  - The record of decision/notification is incomplete or inaccurate
- 6.4 Of the 790 decisions monitored, 783 were found to be decision making accurate (99%) and 7 were found to have decision making errors (1%). The main errors were regarding calculation of income.
- **Appendix 5** provides an analysis of all decision making comments.
- 6.5 Insufficient evidence accounted for 9% of decision making comments this year. An insufficient evidence comment is made when the decision maker has failed to show that they have fully investigated and recorded evidence used or recorded their decision correctly.
- 6.6 During this monitoring year 69 insufficient evidence comments were raised. The main comments related to income. An analysis of the errors found under the insufficient evidence category is contained in Appendix 5.

# Appendix 1

## 2003 Scheme

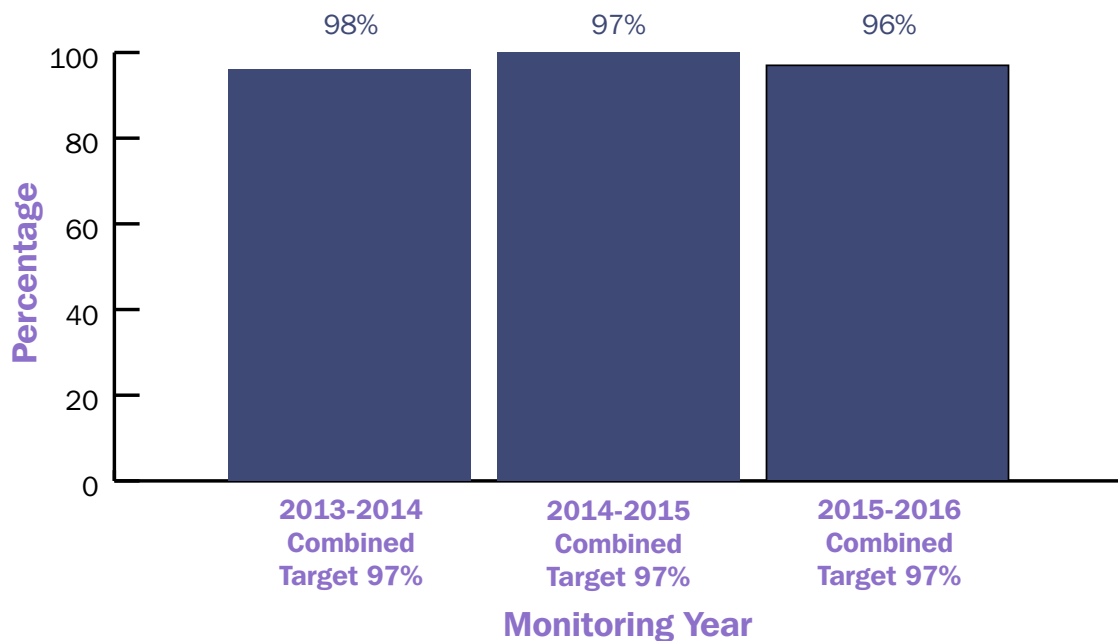
This table records the type of errors found in the decision making process

Maintenance Calculation Comments 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016						
	A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE ON WHICH TO DECIDE	INCORRECT LAW APPLIED/ LAW APPLIED INCORRECTLY	WRONG FINDING OF FACT / INCORRECT INTERPRETATION OF FACT	INCORRECTLY CALCULATED	RECORD OF DECISION / NOTIFICATION IS INCOMPLETE OR INACCURATE	
Jurisdiction	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Effective Date	1	0	0	1	1	<b>3</b>
Prescribed Benefit	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Correct Rate	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Household	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Shared Care	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Earnings – Relevant Week	10	0	0	5	3	<b>18</b>
Earnings – Assessment Period	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Earnings – Calculation	0	0	0	2	2	<b>4</b>
Earnings – Allowance/Deduction	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Earnings – Bonus	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Pension Contributions	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Benefit Income	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Other Income	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Apportionment	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Tolerance	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Positive Customer Contact	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Phasing	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Supersession	4	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
Revision	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Notifications	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Welfare	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Other	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Variations	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Child Support 2 Input	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
CSF 52/53/063	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36</b>

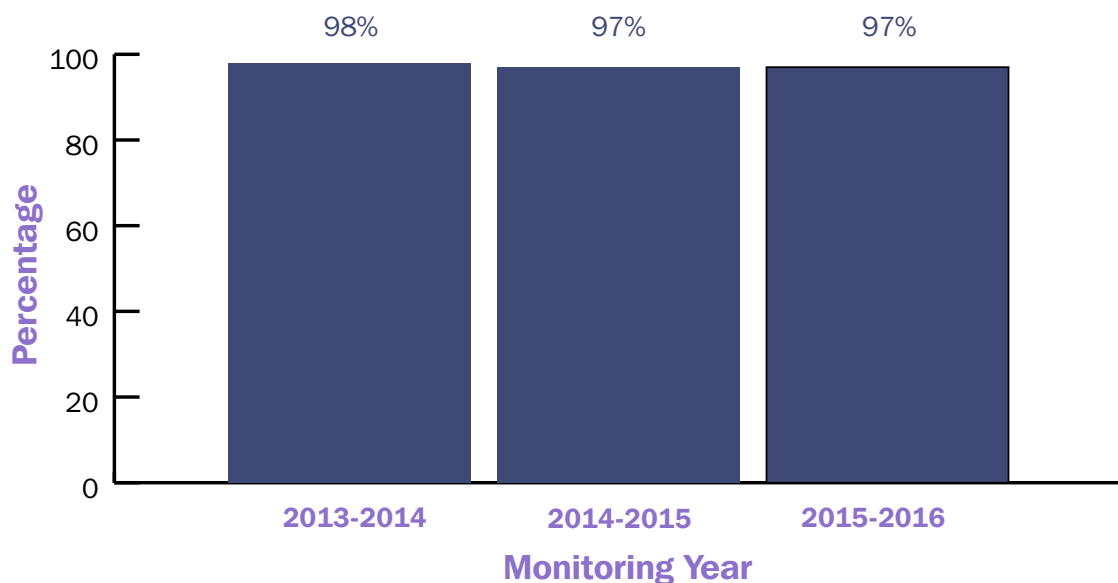


## Appendix 2 2003 Scheme

### Maintenance Calculation Cash Value Accuracy 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2016



### Maintenance Calculation Decision Making Accuracy 1 April 2013– 31 March 2016



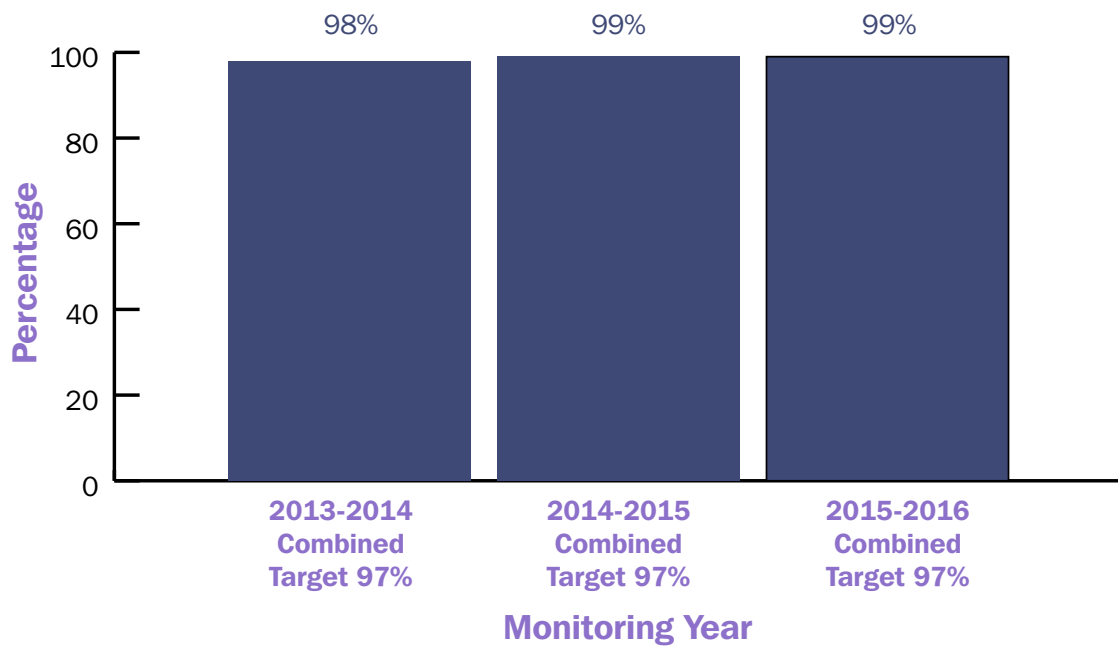
## Appendix 3 1993 Scheme

This table records the type of errors found in the decision making process

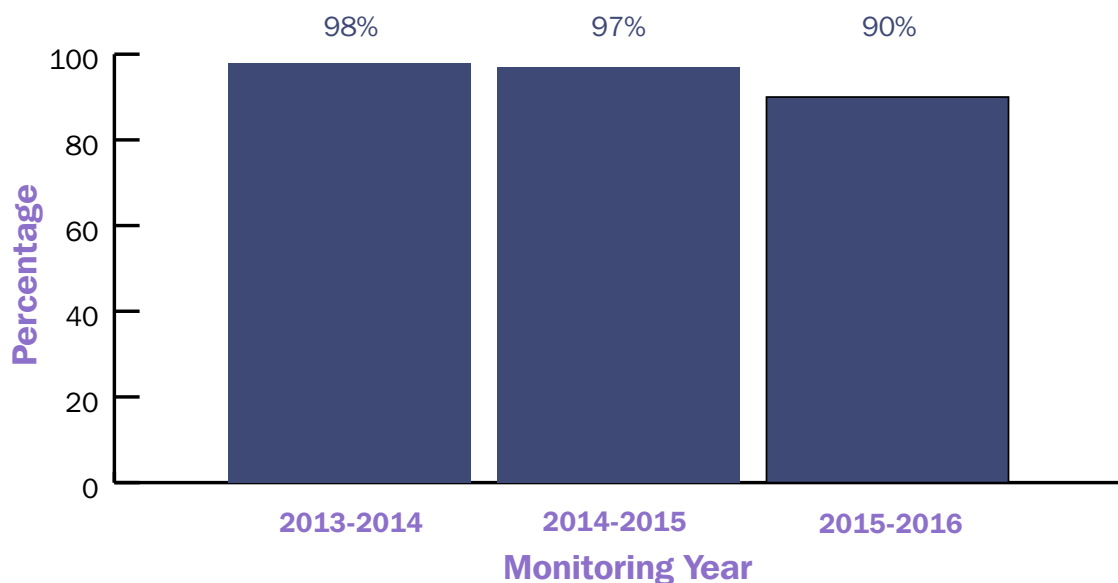
Maintenance Assessment Comments 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016						
	A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE ON WHICH TO DECIDE	INCORRECT LAW APPLIED/ LAW APPLIED INCORRECTLY	WRONG FINDING OF FACT / INCORRECT INTERPRETATION OF FACT	INCORRECTLY CALCULATED	RECORD OF DECISION / NOTIFICATION IS INCOMPLETE OR INACCURATE	
Jurisdiction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Effective Date	3	0	0	0	2	5
Tolerance	0	4	0	0	4	8
Maintenance Requirement	1	0	0	0	0	1
Shared Care	1	0	0	0	0	1
Earnings – Relevant Week	4	2	0	0	1	7
Earnings – Assessment Period	1	0	0	0	1	2
Earnings – Calculation	0	0	0	0	1	1
Earnings – Allowance/Deduction	1	0	0	0	0	1
Earnings – Bonus	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pension Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0
Self-Employed Earnings	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benefit Income	0	1	0	0	1	2
Other Income/Costs	1	2	0	0	2	5
Mortgage	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rent	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other Housing	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rates	0	1	0	0	0	1
Travel To Work	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contribution To Maintenance	0	0	0	0	3	3
Departure	0	0	0	0	0	0
Review	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supersession	1	0	0	1	5	7
Revision	0	0	0	0	1	1
Workflow Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
Child Support Computer System/ Child Support 2 Input	1	0	0	0	2	3
Notifications	0	0	0	0	0	0
Welfare	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	0	0	0	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>55</b>

## Appendix 4 1993 Scheme

### Maintenance Assessment Cash Value Accuracy 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2016



### Maintenance Assessment Decision Making Accuracy 1 April 2013– 31 March 2016



## Appendix 5

### CM2012 Scheme

This table records the type of errors found in the decision making process

Maintenance Calculation Comments 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016						
	A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE ON WHICH TO DECIDE	INCORRECT LAW APPLIED/ LAW APPLIED INCORRECTLY	WRONG FINDING OF FACT / INCORRECT INTERPRETATION OF FACT	INCORRECTLY CALCULATED	RECORD OF DECISION / NOTIFICATION IS INCOMPLETE OR INACCURATE	
Jurisdiction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Effective Date	12	2	1	13	7	35
Prescribed Benefit	7	3	0	1	0	11
Correct Rate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Household	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shared Care	5	0	1	3	0	9
Earnings – Relevant Week	14	1	0	4	5	24
Earnings – Assessment Period	7	0	0	6	0	13
Earnings – Calculation	9	0	2	15	0	26
Earnings – Allowance/Deduction	0	1	0	0	0	1
Earnings – Bonus	4	0	0	0	0	4
Pension Contributions	4	0	0	0	0	4
Benefit Income	3	0	2	0	3	8
Other Income	4	0	0	6	0	10
Apportionment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tolerance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Positive Customer Contact	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supersession	0	0	1	0	0	1
Revision	0	0	0	0	0	0
Notifications	0	0	0	0	23	23
Welfare	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	4	0	4
Variations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Qualifying Child	0	0	0	2	0	2
ROC/CIFBA	0	0	0	1	0	1
Welfare	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>180</b>

## Appendix 6

### The Process of Decision Making

As part of the Decision Making process there are different steps which the individual decision maker must consider.

**Errors in following the Decision-Making process results in a decision making comment being included but do not necessarily impact on the outcome decision.**

Comments include:-

- Identifying that an assessment needs to be considered
- Calculating the effective date of the assessment
- Gathering the evidence
- Clarifying the evidence
- Deciding which evidence to use
- Recording the evidence onto the computer system
- Adjudicating

**Elements taken into account when calculating a Maintenance Calculation/Assessment**

- Effective date of liability
- Household Members
- Earnings – Employed, Self Employed
- Other Income – Occupational or Personal Pensions, Tax Credits
- Benefit Income
- Shared Care of the qualifying child(ren)
- Other children in household
- Other Child Maintenance Agreements
- Other Financial Responsibilities
- Housing Costs, Travel to Work Costs (1993 scheme only), etc

## Appendix 7

### Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee

1. The Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 removed the distinction between adjudication decisions made by adjudication officers and departmental decisions and introduced single status decision-makers. This removed the statutory requirement for a Chief Adjudication Officer and by default, his responsibility for reporting on the standard of adjudication.
2. In addition to being responsible for the delivery of the decision-making process and the standard of decisions made, the Department was made responsible for reporting on the standard of decisions against which there is a right of appeal. These responsibilities have been delegated to the Chief Executive of the Social Security Agency and the Director of the Child Maintenance Service.
3. The responsibility requires the Chief Executive and the Director of CMS to have monitoring programmes in place to determine the standards that are to be reported. It has been recognised however, that to enhance this programme and its credibility and transparency with the public, some independent oversight of the arrangements is necessary. Accordingly a joint Standards Committee has been appointed with an independent chairperson and having terms of reference agreed by the Chief Executive and the Director of CMS.
4. The Committee acts in an advisory capacity only and has no executive powers. Its objectives are to:
  - Provide assurance to the Chief Executive and the Director of CMS that effective decision-making monitoring procedures are in place, to confirm legislation is properly applied and to monitor and report performance;
  - Identify common trends relating to the quality of the decision-making and to highlight those areas where improvement is needed;
  - Make specific recommendations on any area considered appropriate, including accuracy;
  - Provide assurance to the Chief Executive and the Director of CMS that mechanisms are in place to feed back monitoring results to enable continuous improvement;
  - Report to the Chief Executive and the Director of CMS on how the decision-making process is operating and where necessary to make recommendations for changes to it;

- Report on the effectiveness of action taken by the Agency and the Service to achieve improvements; and
  - Provide the Chief Executive and the Director of CMS with an annual assurance in the form of a report on the quality of decision-making in the Agency and the Service and such other reports as the Chief Executive and the Director of CMS or the Standards Committee consider appropriate.
5. Standards Committee meetings are held 4 times yearly to coincide with the monitoring programmes and minutes are taken and agreed by the Committee members.
  6. An agenda is prepared in advance of each meeting and circulated to Committee members for consideration.
  7. The annual report is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Article 76 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

## Committee Membership

<b>Chair Eileen Evason (CBE)</b>	Emeritus Professor in Social Administration, University of Ulster
<b>Independent Member Kevin Higgins</b>	Advice NI
<b>Independent Member Laura McPolin</b>	Barrister, Civil and Family Law
<b>John McKervill</b>	Director of Pensions, Disability and Corporate Services, Social Security Agency
<b>Conrad McConnell</b>	Assistant Director Benefits Security, Social Security Agency
<b>David Malcolm</b>	Director, Child Maintenance Service
<b>Eileen Donnelly</b>	Case Monitoring Team, Child Maintenance Service
<b>Lacey Walker</b>	Head of Audit, Department for Social Development

## Appendix 8

### Glossary

<b>Annual Review</b>	A review of all CM2012 cases is completed annually so that the Paying Parents circumstances are reflected for the year ahead.
<b>Contribution To Maintenance</b>	Non-resident parents in receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance are not liable to pay assessed maintenance but should have an amount equal to the minimum amount deducted from their benefit as a contribution to maintenance.
<b>Decision Maker</b>	The officer making decisions on behalf of the Department.
<b>Decision Making</b>	The process of applying the child support legislation and guidance to evidence supplied by clients.
<b>Decision Not To Assess</b>	When a change is notified but cannot be completed because; - information has not been forthcoming; tolerance has not been broken; request is outside the formula; nature of dispute is not known or no error was found.
<b>Default Maintenance Decision</b>	A Default Maintenance Decision is made, in 2003 Scheme cases, when the non-resident parent has not provided sufficient information for a Maintenance Calculation to be made and the missing information cannot be obtained from elsewhere.
<b>Departure</b>	Where a parent has exceptional circumstances not covered by the basic procedures of the 1993 Scheme.
<b>Maintenance Assessment</b>	A Maintenance Assessment calculated on the Child Support Computer System.
<b>Initial Maintenance Assessment</b>	The first assessment completed after receipt of a Maintenance Application Form and a Maintenance Enquiry Form, in 1993 Scheme cases.
<b>Insufficient Evidence</b>	When a decision is made without gathering all the evidence required to make a comprehensive decision.
<b>Interim Effective Date</b>	The effective date used to replace an Interim Maintenance Assessment when information cannot be traced back to the original effective date.



<b>Interim Maintenance Assessment</b>	An Interim Maintenance Assessment is imposed in 1993 Scheme cases when the non-resident parent either does not provide, or is unable to provide, information.
<b>Last Decision</b>	The last assessment completed on the case selected for checking, taken from a random sample.
<b>Maintenance Assessment</b>	Liability calculated under the 1993 Scheme.
<b>Maintenance Calculation</b>	Liability calculated under the 2003 Scheme.
<b>Minimum Amount</b>	Payment at a set rate required from a non-resident parent if the amount of maintenance payable is assessed as nil or less than the prescribed minimum payment, in 1993 Scheme cases.
<b>2003 Scheme</b>	Legislation effective from 3 March 2003 to calculate a non-resident parent's liability for child maintenance.
<b>Paying Parent</b>	A parent who has a liability to maintain a parent with care's child(ren) but who lives apart from the parent with care.
<b>1993 Scheme</b>	Legislation effective from 5 April 1993 to calculate a non-resident parent's liability for child maintenance.
<b>Receiving Parent</b>	A parent who has care of the qualifying child(ren).
<b>Revision</b>	A decision is revised where it is changed from the date of the original decision as a consequence of action or application arising within the acceptable period of revision.
<b>Supersession</b>	A decision is superseded where there is a relevant change of circumstances changing the original decision from a later date.
<b>Variation</b>	Where a parent has exceptional circumstances not covered by the basic procedures of the 2003 Scheme.
<b>CM2012</b>	Scheme introduced in 2012 to replace the existing 1993 and 2003 schemes.

## Appendix 9

### NI Child Maintenance Service Good News

#### Total money Collected for children in the 2015/2016 financial year

- **£23.7M** Collected and arranged.

**Child Maintenance Services (CMS) have the power to deduct money direct from bank accounts that have been frozen when the paying parent does not pay. This can be by regular deductions or by taking a lump sum from the relevant bank account. These are known as Deduction Orders.**

Case had been referred for Liability Order action. After trace action, they discovered substantial available funds and then referred the case to the Deduction Order Team (DOT) in the hopes for success of securing a lump sum order. The PP had been non compliant with the agency at this stage and had not made a payment in nearly 2 years. A lump sum of £5279.72 was secured from the PP's accounts to fully clear the arrears, £3364.39 paid to the RP and the remaining £1915.33 paid to the Secretary of state.

Case was referred from our Post Liability Order (L/O) team who had failed to secure payments from PP via an Instalment Order. The Deduction Order Team was able to secure a Lump Sum of £3300 from his account. PP was very unhappy and after discussion with the DOT officer, did not supply any evidence and failed to appeal order. RP was delighted with the outcome and thanked DO team and Legal team for their work

Case was referred to Pre L/O where a liability order was secured. This was then passed to the Post L/O team who were able to register the debt with the enforcement of judgments office. This forced the PP to offer a Full and final settlement payment. Post L/O was able to secure £6185.07 via a card payment and the RP agreed to write off the remaining £13741.35 due to her.

Due to non compliance from the NRP, the case was referred to Pre L/O to collect arrears of £8544.31, all due to the RP. PP was argumentative and not willing to cooperate. CWs within Pre L/O were able to determine that the PP's arguments were invalid and continued with enforcement action. Full and final settlement was discussed with the PP, who in turn agreed to pay £5000. RP accepted this and the PP has since set up a direct debit to continue to pay the regular maintenance. The case is now compliant.



