

Record £1 billion in child support

New figures reveal:

- a record £1 billion has been collected and arranged for British children in the last year by the Child Maintenance Service
- nearly 800,000 children are now covered by a child maintenance arrangement
- record-breaking results prove strength of vital service to separated parents and children

The huge sum was collected and arranged on behalf of children of separated parents, helping single-parent households get the financial support they need.

Child maintenance and family-based payments lift around 120,000 children out of poverty each year. Over the last year, more payments than ever have been collected and arranged to ensure children living in separated families are covered by a maintenance arrangement between their parents – with nearly 800,000 children now supported by the service.

The service is a vital part of tackling poverty and helping to level up opportunity for children whose parents have separated, ensuring they get the best start in life.

DWP Lords Minister and Minister for Women Baroness Stedman-Scott said:

We are securing significant sums for children who might otherwise have gone without, in turn helping to lift 120,000 children out of poverty every year.

Whether parents use us as a go-between or as an enforcer when money isn't being handed over, this service is changing the lives of children around the country.

Tougher powers given to the service in 2019 have strengthened the consequences for parents who refuse to pay, including taking money directly from bank accounts. Ramped-up enforcement activities this year have helped restore maintenance payments to above pre-pandemic levels, with new figures today showing a 19% increase in liability orders to the court, on the last quarter.

Sanctions including warnings of prison sentences, passport confiscations and driving licence seizures, have helped the CMS recoup a total of £1.8 million

in the year up to September 2021.

In one recent case, the CMS made a sanctions application to withdraw a non-paying parent's driving licence. This court action proved to be a wake-up call for the parent, as they now make £100 weekly payments to the parent with full-time care – covering both arrears and ongoing maintenance. They also now see their child more regularly at the weekends.

The parent with full time care of the child thanked the CMS for their action, believing it encouraged the other parent to do the right thing for their child, saying:

This was all I wanted, which was worth more than the money itself.

The CMS also continues to work hard on historic cases. In a recent example a £28,000 lump sum was secured for a single parent after the sale of the non-paying parent's property, which CMS placed a charging order against.

The CMS caseworker described the moment she phoned the receiving parent to tell them the news.

The CMS caseworker said:

To phone a parent to tell them about such a life changing amount, is an amazing feeling.

I spoke to her again recently to find out how she is and she said the money has helped her immensely.

Reacting to both cases, Baroness Stedman-Scott said:

These are just two of many cases where our action has changed lives.

We know most parents want the best for their children, but there are parents out there who refuse to take responsibility. My message to them is that we will not just stand by – we will help every child we can get the best start and support in life.

Media enquiries for this press release –

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