

Gareth Davies

request-14107-
xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Ref: VTR 1304

Date: 1 October 2009

Dear Mr Davies,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated 5 July 2009. Your request has been considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Please accept my apology for the delay in replying. Please find below a copy of your request together with a corresponding response.

Request

On 16 March 2009 in response to a FOI request you published a table of information showing the number of occasions on which you made a special payment in each of the last five years for which data was available, and the total sum paid out in each year. I would be grateful if you would provide, in relationship to this data for each available year in the last five, the lower quartile, second quartile and upper quartile values and the amounts of the lowest and highest payments.

Response

The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (the Commission) took over responsibility for the Child Support Agency (CSA) on 1 November 2008.

The Commission operates a discretionary, non-statutory scheme called special payments, providing financial redress for mal-administration. Each case is considered on its own merits and redress is made in those cases where mistakes or maladministration have had a direct adverse effect on the life of the customer or, more exceptionally, on the life of another person, for example the customer's spouse or another family member. There are no prescribed limits of payment per person. Each incidence of error or maladministration occurring on a customer's case is given consideration and one payment may be made to redress the whole.

The categories under which special payments can be made are:

- Actual financial loss - where maladministration has directly caused the customer to incur additional expenditure that would not have been otherwise;

- Compensation for delay – relating to under or over payment caused by a delay in reviewing a maintenance assessment; and
- Consolatory payments - in recognition of impact on customer / third party.

The attached Table 1 shows the value and number of special payments from 2003/04 to 2007/08. Special payment quartile values from 2002/2003 to 2007/2008 are shown in Table 2.

I hope you find the information you have been provided with helpful. If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

**Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission
Freedom of Information Act Focal Point**

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing FOI.FocalPoint@childmaintenance.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, Freedom of Information Act Focal Point, PO Box 61791, London, SW1P 9NT. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF www.ico.gov.uk.

Table 1 - The value and number of special payments from 2003/04 to 2007/08

	Special Payments	
Years	Value ¹ (£million)	Number of Payments²
2003/04	2.3	6,900
2004/05	3.0	9,000
2005/06	3.9	11,600
2006/07	3.3	13,500
2007/08	4.4	12,800

1. The figures for the value of payment are rounded to the nearest £0.1 million.
2. The figures for the total number of payments are rounded to the nearest 100.
3. 2007/08 are the latest figures available.

Table 2 - Special payments quartile values from 2002/2003 to 2007/2008

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008	
	Lowest Payment	Highest Payment	Lowest Payment	Highest Payment	Lowest Payment	Highest Payment	Lowest Payment	Highest Payment	Lowest Payment	Highest Payment	Lowest Payment	Highest Payment
Lower Quartile	£0.06	£15.00	£0.03	£15.00	£0.27	£20.00	£1.00	£32.62	£0.66	£44.81	£0.22	£46.87
2nd Quartile	£15.00	£50.00	£15.00	£50.00	£20.00	£50.00	£32.64	£50.00	£44.85	£50.00	£46.88	£50.00
3rd Quartile	£50.00	£75.00	£50.00	£75.00	£50.00	£75.51	£50.00	£100.00	£50.00	£100.00	£50.00	£133.03
Upper Quartile	£75.00	£41,000	£75.00	£15,765.49	£75.68	£12,174.04	£100.00	£23,650.64	£100.00	£18,048.89	£133.19	£25,721.01

Notes to table

1. Information on the total amount paid out under the non-statutory scheme was published annually in the Child Support Agency annual report and accounts and is therefore subject to external audit. The analysis carried out in the table is based on internal Agency records and due to recording and timing differences may differ from figures previously published in the annual accounts.
2. The information in this table relates to each award made. An individual could receive more than one award dependent on the nature of the case. For example they could receive a payment for financial loss, interest on that loss and a consolatory payment. Collating the information in a format that presents total payments to each customer would exceed the disproportionate costs limit of one member of staff working for 2.25 days.
3. 2007/08 – latest figures available.