

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**  
**Central Freedom of Information Team**

freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

**Our reference:** IR34

**Date:** 19/02/2015

Dear Mr Goggins,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 16 January 2015. You asked:-

Please provide ALL information on Child Maintenance Option's from 1996 and also provide a copy of the template letters sent to benefit claimant's who had monies paid without providing information on the name of their father's child.

Child Maintenance Options is a service provided by the Child Maintenance Group, which is part of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Although you have asked for information about this service from 1996, the Child Maintenance Options Service did not open until 2012. It now manages all new applications for a statutory arrangement. It uses slightly different rules to the Child Support Agency which is closed to new applications but still manages many statutory arrangements set up before December 2013.

Child Maintenance Options is separate from the statutory child maintenance services, but it can give information about these services as a way of arranging child maintenance.

You request 'ALL' information and we estimate that the cost of complying with this request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600. The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central Government it is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing this part of your request further.

However, you may be interested to know that more information about this service can be found on its website at:

<http://www.cmoptions.org/en/about/index.asp>

You ask for all of the letters sent to claimants who receive benefits without providing details of their children's father. As we do not take these details into account when processing an individual's claim to benefit there are no specific letters for this situation.

As explained in our previous response, when a claimant with a child makes a claim to one of the working-age benefits, they are asked whether they wish to be referred to Child Maintenance Options or not. A referral does not result in a template letter being sent to the claimant. Not choosing to have a referral does not result in a template letter being sent to the claimant and there are no special letters for that circumstance.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

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**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 [freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk) or by writing to: DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. 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.org.uk/Global/contact\\_us](http://www.ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us) or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745