

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk

Our Ref: FOI2020/14194

8 April 2020

Dear Elliot Williams

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 22 March. You asked:

- 1.What is the full procedure for agreeing to take over arrears accrued under CSA whilst the case was in a private family arrangement.*
- 2.what is the full procedure for checking that debts accrued under CSA had not been paid prior to CMS taking over.*
- 3.Once CMS had taken over arrears accrued under CSA, what are the full procedures for seeking payment on said arrears*

DWP Response:

The Act provides a right of access to recorded information held by a public authority like DWP (subject to certain exemptions) The Act does not oblige a public authority to create new information to answer questions; nor does it require a public authority to give advice, opinion or explanation in relation to issues/policies under question. If you ask a question, rather than requesting recorded information, we will provide you with the recorded information that best answers the question.

I confirm that the Department holds no recorded information to answer your request. However, to be helpful you may find the following explanation useful. This has however been provided outside our obligations under the Freedom of Information regime.

Where a case had a private arrangement under Child Support Agency (CSA) as the arrangement was private this is outside of the departments remit.

Child Maintenance Service only look at arrears that had accrued whilst the customers had a case with the service.

We offer two different types of child maintenance arrangement. The Direct Pay service is where we work out how much child maintenance is payable and then help separated parents to work together to make payments between themselves.

Additionally, if we had done the calculation but the case was paid under Direct Pay, any CSA arrears recorded for the Direct Pay period will be adjusted off.

More information is available in the public domain on Gov.uk therefore please see the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-maintenance-compliance-and-arrears-strategy-2018>

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI Team

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@dw.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI 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
Web: ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745