



Child Maintenance

Child maintenance is an arrangement between you and the other parent of your child. It covers how your child's living costs will be paid for when one of the parents no longer lives with them. Both parents are responsible for the costs of raising their children.¹

Child maintenance can be either:

- a private arrangement between you and the other parent, or
- made through the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) - a government scheme

Child Maintenance Service (CMS)

The Child Maintenance Service can:

- work out an amount to pay
- arrange payments and take action if a parent does not pay
- sort out disagreements about parentage
- try to find the other parent if you do not know where they are

You can use the Child Maintenance Service to arrange child maintenance if you do not want your child's other parent to know your location or personal information - for example, if you've experienced domestic abuse. You can find [more information here](#).

Making an arrangement through CMS with a National Insurance number

1. Contact Child Maintenance Options for help and support on 0800 083 4375. Lines are open: 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm Saturday.
2. Ask if they're able to call you back with an interpreter if needed. They may not be able to.
3. Explain why you cannot come to a voluntary arrangement and ask for help applying.

Making an arrangement through CMS without a National insurance number (including if you do not leave to remain in the UK)²

4. Follow steps 1-3 above.
5. Ask for a Unique Reference Indicator (URI number).
6. Ask to be put through to the Applications Team.
7. Inform the Applications Team that you do not have a National Insurance number/ leave to remain in the UK, but that you are habitually resident in the UK, which means that you live in the UK.
8. Explain that the Applications Team will need to raise an 'incident' and the application will need to be processed by the Clerical Team.
9. Request a Child Maintenance Service (CMS) reference number.
10. Ask any questions you might have, such as how long they think it will take to process the application, when you should next expect to hear from them, what the next steps will be and how you should contact them in the future.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/child-maintenance-service>

² Taken from: <https://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/resources/child-maintenance/>