

A Brief Guide to Calculation of Child Maintenance Payments by the Child Support Agency (“CSA”)

The CSA works out the amount of child maintenance using the weekly net income of the non-resident parent (that is the parent living in a separate household from the parent with care and qualifying child(ren) for whom they are liable to pay maintenance). The amount of child benefit depends on:-

1. The number of qualifying children the child maintenance is for;
2. The net income and circumstances of the non-resident parent;
3. The number of children living with the non-resident parent;

The non-resident parent’s income usually includes earnings (including overtime), profit from their business (if self employed) or an occupational or personal pension. The following deductions are made from gross pay to calculate net weekly income:-

1. Income Tax;
2. National Insurance contributions; and
3. Contributions to approved occupational or personal pension schemes.

Non-resident parents with a net weekly income of more than £200 a week will pay a basic rate. This is a percentage of that parent’s net weekly income, calculated as described above. The rates are as follows:-

1. 15% if there is one qualifying child;
2. 20% for two qualifying children; and
3. 25% for three or more qualifying children.

If a child stays overnight with the non-resident parent on a regular basis, child maintenance for that child will be reduced on the basis of 1/7 for each night of weekly shared care as follows:-

1. 52 to 103 nights care per year – 1/7 reduction;
2. 104 to 155 nights care per year – 2/7 reduction;
3. 156 to 174 nights care per year – 3/7 reduction;
4. 175 or more nights care per year – 50% reduction.

The following examples provide an approximate guide to the level of child maintenance that a non-resident parent may be asked to pay/that the parent with care can expect to receive based on the rules applicable to the current Child Support Agency Scheme. In each case, the following assumptions have been made:

- That the non-resident parent's net weekly income is £1,000.00 per week;
- That the non-resident parent does not receive any relevant benefits;
- That the parent with care receives neither Income Support nor income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.

Example 1

- The non-resident parent's net weekly income: £1,000.00;
- The number of children maintenance will be paid for: One;
- The average nights per year the non-resident parent has the child: Less than 52;
- The number of other children living in the non-resident parent's house: Zero;
- The approximate weekly amount of child maintenance: £150.00.

Example 2

- The non-resident parent's net weekly income: £1,000.00;
- The number of children maintenance will be paid for: Two;
- The average nights per year the non-resident parent has the children: 52 to 103;
- The number of other children living in the non-resident parent's house: Zero;
- The approximate weekly amount of child maintenance: £171.00.

Example 3

- The non-resident parent's net weekly income: £1,000.00;
- The number of children maintenance will be paid for: Three or more;
- The average nights per year the non-resident parent has the children: 104 to 155;
- The number of other children living in the non-resident parent's house: One;
- The approximate weekly amount of child maintenance: £178.00.

The above details set out in summary only some of the most important provisions relating to the CSA assessment of child maintenance.

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