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How will the Child Maintenance Options service use my personal information?

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This leaflet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. It should not be taken as giving legal advice. We have done our best to make sure the leaflet is correct as of October 2008. However, it is not comprehensive and it may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law. Your position may depend on your particular circumstances and you should seek independent specialist advice before making financial decisions based on the leaflet. A list of specialist organisations that may be able to offer detailed advice is given at the end.

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About this leaflet

This leaflet tells you how and why we store and collect information about you.

To offer you impartial information and support, we sometimes need to gather some personal details from you. We take our responsibility to protect your privacy very seriously.

This leaflet explains:

- why and how we collect information from you
- what we do with it and how we protect it
- how you can ask to see any of the information we have on file for you at any time.

How the Child Maintenance Options service can help you

At Child Maintenance Options, we're here to help with questions like these:

- What are my options for child maintenance?
- How do I know what's right for me and my child?
- Where can I go for help?

Our service is run by the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, a new child maintenance body set up in July 2008.

We provide unbiased information and support to help parents make informed choices about all the child maintenance options available. We offer a different service from the CSA, which is just one option for getting child maintenance from the other parent.

We're here to help you decide which option is best for you.

What will you do if I contact you?

Parents who live apart often need to deal with difficult practical things like money, childcare while they are at work, and feelings of stress and anger. We're not experts in these areas, but we can give you information and put you in touch with specialist organisations that can help. For example:

- **we can** talk you through the options for putting in place a child maintenance arrangement, if you don't already have one
- **we can** help you check if your existing child maintenance arrangement is the right one for you and your child
- **we can** offer practical information on subjects linked to child maintenance, such as housing, work and money.

Get in touch

You can contact our freephone* information line on **0800 988 0988** and speak to someone today. We are open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm Saturday.

Our helpline staff are specially trained to provide unbiased information and support on child maintenance. Our service is available to any parent in England, Wales or Scotland.

If you are a guardian, relative or friend, or if you have a professional interest in finding out more about child maintenance, we may also be able to help you.

* Calls to 0800 numbers are free from BT landlines but you may have to pay if you use another phone company or a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

What information do we collect?

We collect relevant personal information from you when you phone us, write to us or email us through our website www.cmoptions.org

The personal information we collect depends on whether you are:

- asking for information and support on child maintenance
- making a complaint
- giving us general feedback.

It may include personal details, such as your name and address, email address and details of your query. We also collect information on how our website is being used.

The personal information you give us is held by the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission. This is why the Commission is sometimes known as the data controller.

Remember: You don't have to give your personal details to use the Child Maintenance Options service. However, choosing not to do so may affect the way we handle your query or complaint.

How is your personal information protected?

Any personal information you provide will be held securely by the Commission in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Act protects your personal information and ensures that:

- we hold and process your information only for purposes that we make clear to you in advance
- we keep your information only for as long as we need to for these purposes
- we have reliable procedures that enable us to hold and process your information securely and confidentially
- we share information about you only when we are legally required to do so.

How will your information be used?

Child Maintenance Options will have your information only if you have contacted us. We don't get your information from anyone else.

People usually contact us and give us their information for one of 3 reasons:

1. Customer enquiries

We'll use the information you give us to offer information and support on child maintenance and any other subjects our service deals with. We'll need your details to write to you or send you the information you have asked for.

2. Complaints

If you have a complaint about Child Maintenance Options, we'll use the information you provide to investigate your complaint and send you a response. Our leaflet, *How can I complain about the Child Maintenance Options service?*, says more about this.

3. Feedback

If you provide feedback on the service we offer, we will only use it to help us deal with any problems you may have had and to improve our service.

Website

When you visit the Child Maintenance Options website, it will create and store short files, called cookies, on your computer. These files contain information about how you use our website and they may contain some personal details.

The cookies enable us to gather statistics on how people use our website.

We'll use this information to improve the site's layout and information, based on the way customers enter, move around and leave the site.

Accessing your personal information

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, you have the right to ask to see what information we are storing about you on computer or in paper files.

You need to ask us in writing, on paper or by email, and include the following:

- your full name
- your address
- your unique reference number from Child Maintenance Options, if you have one
- your National Insurance number
- details of what information you want to see.

Write 'subject access request' at the top of your letter or in the subject line of your email.

We need all these details to confirm your identity and to protect your privacy. You should include any details that may help us find the information you want.

You should send us your request by:

- **writing to us** at
Child Maintenance Options
Selectapost 38
Sheffield
S97 3FJ, or
- **emailing us** through
the website at
www.cmoptions.org

When we have your request and all the details we need from you, we'll send you a copy of the information you have asked for – if we have it – within 40 days.

We'll send it by recorded delivery as an extra precaution to protect your information.



Providing impartial information and support for both parents to make choices about child maintenance

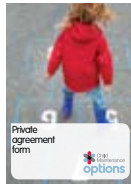
How to order our other leaflets

You can order our free leaflets by phone. The diagram lists them and explains what to ask for when you call.

Help with making choices about child maintenance:



Your child maintenance options



Private agreement form

About the Child Maintenance Options service:



Our complaints process



How we handle your data

Practical information on the issues that you may face when parenting apart:



Your rights and responsibilities



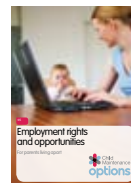
You and your child's wellbeing



Housing rights and options



How to deal with your finances



Managing work and parenting

Providing impartial information and support for both parents to make choices about child maintenance

Contact us

Freephone* **0800 988 0988**

8am–8pm Monday to Friday

9am–4pm Saturday

www.cmoptions.org

This leaflet is also available in other languages, in large print, in Braille and on audio cassette.

You can get these formats by calling us on freephone*

0800 988 0988

Our TextBox and textphone number is **0800 988 9 888**

* Calls to 0800 numbers are free from BT landlines but you may have to pay if you use another phone company, a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

