

Curfews proposed for parents who fail to pay child maintenance

The change is being considered as part of fresh proposals that will get more of the money that is owed to the children of separated parents.

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) collected or arranged £1 billion in child maintenance payments last year, operating as a crucial weapon in the battle against child poverty. Child support payments help lift around 140,000 children out of poverty each year.

Curfew orders would be another method of enforcement, alongside current powers which include passport and driving license confiscation and earnings deduction orders, to tackle parents who continually refuse to pay maintenance owed.

As an alternative sanction to prison, which is costly and prevents maintenance getting to children, curfews would act as a deterrent by restricting and disrupting non-compliant parents' lifestyles, stopping them, for example, from going out for dinner, to the pub or going on holiday.

The curfews would be monitored by an electronic tag with an electronic monitoring service applying the tag, monitoring and making sure the parent complies with the rules of the tag. If parents fail to comply, the CMS would be able refer them back to court which might then extend the curfew order or impose a prison sentence.

DWP Lords Minister Baroness Stedman-Scott said:

For children in low-income households, maintenance payments can make all the difference, lifting them out of poverty.

We are not afraid to go after those parents who deliberately and repeatedly refuse to pay for their children.

Curfew orders are another step towards providing the CMS with a full arsenal of powers to make sure children get the financial support they need to have the best start in life.

This builds on a [new powers introduced earlier this year](#) to digitise all communications to parents and improvements to help the service trace the paying parent, calculate maintenance and enforce arrears more effectively.

The consultation is published [here](#) and closes on 12 August 2022.

Further information

- The Child Maintenance Service was established in 2012 to replace the old

Child Support Agency, to increase levels of cooperation between separated parents and encourage parents to meet their responsibilities to provide their children with the financial support they need to secure better outcomes in life.

- [Get help arranging child maintenance] (<https://child-maintenance.service.gov.uk/get-help-arranging-child-maintenance/>) is a new digital service that helps parents decide what type of child maintenance arrangement is right for them and their circumstances.
- Curfew orders will take account of each individual's circumstances.
- This power will only apply to paying parents living in England, Scotland, or Wales as with our current powers of driving licence and passport disqualification and commitment to prison.
- The consultation period begins on 9 July 2022 and runs until 12 August 2022.
- Curfew orders will be added to the enforcement powers of the CMS subject to parliamentary approval.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

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