

'Kids Aren't Free'

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Child Maintenance

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Abstract

In 2012 we carried out an analysis, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, of child maintenance arrangements of single parents on benefit. As we know these are a financially vulnerable population and given the nature of proposed changes to the statutory child maintenance system (potentially implementing a financial disincentive to use the service) we felt it important to look at the arrangements these families had in place.

However we went beyond simply counting what arrangements are in place and levels of compliance and payment received. We explored motivations for having different arrangements in place and attitudes around arrangement type and maintenance in general.

We found that there were a variety of reasons why single parents had private, statutory or no child maintenance arrangements in place. This presentation will cover the different trade-offs taking place when considering arrangements, based on qualitative research carried out for the 'Kids Aren't Free' report, and how these reflect various attitudes to the role of child maintenance which should be considered in policy development.

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