

A qualitative research study on Child Support

The influence of child support payments on single payee parent family's economic wellbeing: findings from a qualitative study.

Introduction

Qualitative research explored payee parents' experiences within the Australian child support environment. The economic wellbeing of single parents entitled to child support payments is often dependent on the actual receipt of these payments. As such, single payee parents' economic wellbeing is influenced by child support arrangements, and receipt and reliance on the payments which for many can be problematic. This research is ongoing and therefore these are initial findings.

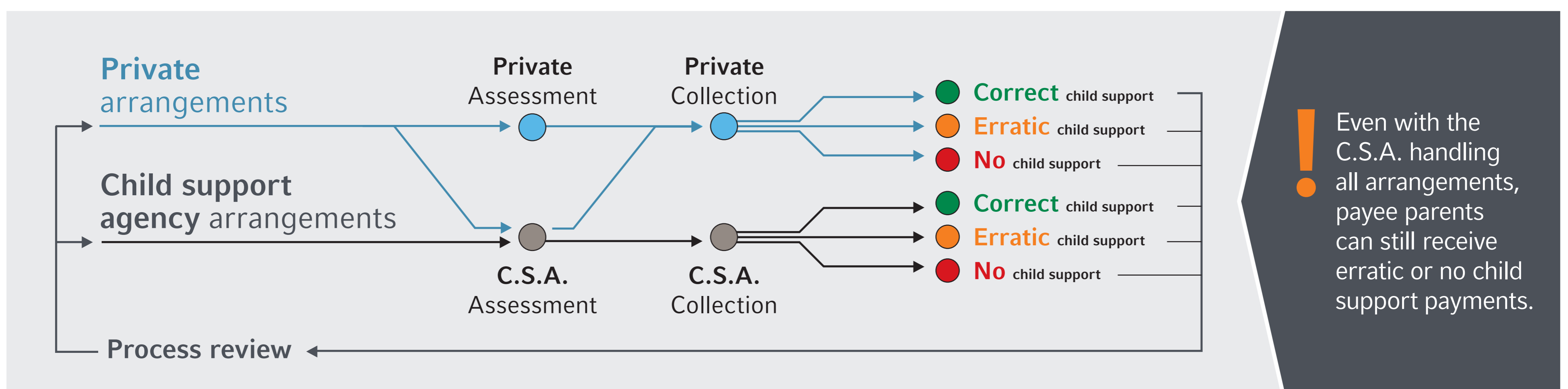
Method

This research used the qualitative approach of grounded theory to explore payee parents' experiences with child support. This research is ongoing and as such these are initial findings based on in-depth interviews conducted with 20 single payee parents entitled to child support. The grounded theory method allows for themes to emerge from the data and involves simultaneous data collection and analysis.

Findings

This ongoing qualitative research explores the experiences of single payee parents entitled to child support. Initial findings of the research include that child support arrangements, receipt of payments and reliance on child support can greatly impact the economic wellbeing of single payee parents. These initial findings will be further explored and expanded upon throughout the continuing research.

Child support payment arrangements



Child support payments

Correct child support	Erratic child support	No child support
<p>"Now I get it [child support] regularly"</p> <p>"Most of the time they're [child support payments] regular"</p> <p>"I have got it [child support] religiously from [payer parent] for, yeah it must be a good six years flat out and ongoing, so yeah it's been good"</p>	<p>"There have been some stages where he hasn't paid the full amount or paid on time"</p> <p>"But the payments [child support] were for some reason were quite, were you know quite wildly different at times"</p> <p>"He pays [child support] late every single month, like I'm a month behind"</p> <p>"He's paid less than 10% of his monthly amount [child support] for the past you know, I suppose um six years"</p> <p>"It depends, it [child support] could be a day late it could be a week late, it's never been early, and maybe once or twice it's been on the due date"</p>	<p>"I have been finding it tough without any um... child support...and when I do get child support it's not, it's just the minimum amount"</p> <p>"It's [child support] not exact and its pretty unpredictable"</p> <p>"It's [child support] always been late but it does eventually get there"</p> <p>"So when it's [child support] in there I think great there's a little bit extra, um...but yeah it doesn't, I don't think about it...it is spasmodic"</p> <p>"No it was always on and off [child support], it was always on and off and I don't think he caught up at any stage"</p>
<p>"He has been employed amongst the last three years that he has been paying child support, but because he has been paid cash in hand it's not declared through the government which means no one can track it which means I don't get a cent"</p> <p>"I was getting quite an adequate amount [of child support] and it was all good, and then he stopped working so I got nothing for months"</p> <p>"I have never received it [child support] so I can't miss it, I've never had it so I can't rely on it and it will be classed as a bonus if I ever get it"</p>		

Payee parents child support

Values

"There is equal responsibility on the part of both parents to you know look after that child"

"I guess that's the idea of it [child support], that although I might have primary care and spend the most time with him [son] that therefore, yeah I'm, I would naturally be bearing the brunt of the cost of raising him, therefore the other partner gives me money"

"I think child support is...I think children deserve to be...um... how do I say it...raising a child is not free, it's an expensive thing and I think both parents, if the child has both parents then they should be accountable"

"I'm trying to maintain a lifestyle for the boys as if their dad and I were still together, which I think is quite reasonable"

"I think that it [child support] be to make parents accountable financially for their children"

"He's still their dad and he should still be paying for them"

"I don't think the amount [child support] reflects what um...it costs to...to bring up a child"

"Child support should be holding parents responsible so it's his responsibility to help financially provide for the children, um... it's not really a choice"

"I just think that they [the payer parent] bought the kids into the world so they should support their children no matter what"

"When he was paying me higher amounts [of child support] he didn't think it cost that much to raise [his son]"

Payee parents child support

Reliance

"There's no point relying on that [child support] because it will hurt one day when it stops, which it will"

"When you rely on that amount of money [child support] being there then you are stuck"

"I haven't set up my budget or whatever based on getting that amount, because I have no power or control over getting that money from him, obviously he has a set amount that he's supposed to give me but depending on what he says he's earning so I have no control over it, so I don't rely on it"

"I try not to rely on that money [child support], cause sometimes, there's been one or two occasions where he's said I can't give it to you til the end of the month"

"I just don't rely on when it will come in and what will come in"

"I have always lived in a world where I think I can't rely on anyone for child support"

"I have never relied on it [child support], I have never ever relied on it for food or necessities in life because I can't afford to"

"I'm relying on getting my next one [child support]"

"The amount [child support] affects me because now that I get so little I kind of don't rely on it"

"I found when it was coming late and going down and changing, I found I couldn't rely on that [child support] anymore"

"I don't rely on that money [child support], I just rely on my Centrelink benefits"

"I have never relied on it [child support]"