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## Call on father maintenance payments:

Guidelines should be drawn up to ensure separated fathers pay enough maintenance to support their children, it has been claimed.

A study on separation and parenting focusing on 87 cases found payments varied widely, ranging from 140 euro up to 3000 euro a month.

In a small number of cases wives were forced to take their husbands to court to ensure the money was paid, according to a study by Trinity College.

Evelyn Mahon, from the university's School of Social Work and Social Policy, said guidelines were needed as there was no standard recommended rate of payment.

"Few ex-spouses received any maintenance payments, making the financial well-being of the post-separation family dependent on the residential parent's employment income, and that child maintenance payments when awarded, varied considerably, and could be in arrears, exposing children to a risk of poverty," said Dr Mahon.

The report, which centred on cases before family law in the Circuit Court in 2007, found child maintenance payments were made in 54 out of the 87 cases, with men on lower incomes paying up to 80 euro to pay for living costs, housing, clothes, food, education, mobile phone and other expenses.

There were six cases where payments were in arrears.

The study showed that in just two cases maintenance payments were made specifically to wives in addition to the child payments.

"The question must be asked - does this absence of maintenance payments have negative effects on the financial situation of the ex-wives in question?" the report asked.

"The answer is 'Yes' - it appears to be the case."

