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Website

www.dwp.gov.uk

The DWP responds to severe weather conditions

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is committed to helping vulnerable customers to heat their homes during the cold weather, and is continuing Cold Weather Payments. These provide £25 towards eligible customers' heating costs during each seven-day period of very cold weather. There is no need to claim, eligible customers are paid automatically. (This payment is over and above Winter Fuel Payments made to those over 60.)

The DWP is conscious that customers may need extra reassurance, so some frequently asked questions are printed below. There is also more information at: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/coldweatherpayment>

This website provides information on eligibility, and there is a postcode search facility where customers can find out if Cold Weather Payments have been triggered in their area.

Frequently Asked Questions on Cold Weather Payments

What are Cold Weather Payments?

For customers on a low income, a Cold Weather Payment may be available for each seven-day period at or below zero degrees Celsius.

Who can get Cold Weather Payments?

People on certain qualifying benefits are automatically eligible:

Benefit	Entitlement
Pension Credit	Entitled
Income Support	Entitled if they receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a Disability Premium,• a Child Disability Premium• or they have a child under 5 years.
Income based Jobseeker's	Entitled if they receive:



Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Disability Premium, • a Child Disability Premium • or they have child under 5 years.
Income-related Employment Support Allowance	<p>Entitled if they receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Support Component, • the Work-related Activity Component, • a Severe or Enhanced Disability Premium, • a Pensioner Premium, • or have a child who is disabled or a child under 5 years.

How much is a Cold Weather Payment?

This year payments are £25 per week for any seven consecutive days when the average temperature is zero degrees Celsius or below.

Does the scheme run all year round?

The scheme runs from 1 November to 31 March.

How do you measure the temperature?

We use 85 specified Meteorological Office weather stations

How many weather stations have triggered payments so far?

As of 6 January 2010, 61 of the 85 weather stations have triggered a payment since 1 November (some of them have triggered three or four payments so far).

Why use postcodes linked to weather stations?

This is the most straightforward way to run the scheme. The Meteorological Office advises that the network of 85 weather stations is sufficient to provide national coverage with a reasonable level of local sensitivity.

How can I find out if a Cold Weather Payment has been triggered?

There is a postcode search facility at:

<http://pensions.direct.gov.uk/en/cold-weather-payment/home.asp>

This will show how many payments have been triggered for that postcode. Eligible customers will be paid automatically and do not need to apply.

Will Cold Weather Payment affect other benefits?

Cold Weather Payments will not affect other benefits.

How do customers apply for a Cold Weather Payment?

They don't need to apply – eligible customers will get a Cold Weather Payment automatically once payments are triggered for their area.

What if a customer is eligible, and it has been very cold, and they have not received a payment?

They should tell their pension centre or Jobcentre Plus if they think they should have received a Cold Weather Payment but have not had one. Customers may first like to use the online postcode search facility to check if payments have been triggered for their area).

<http://pensions.direct.gov.uk/en/cold-weather-payment/home.asp>

How will customers get their money?

Customers will receive their money in the usual way that they receive their benefits. So if their benefit is paid directly into a bank account, the Cold Weather payment will be paid into the same account. If they receive their benefit by cheque, that is how they will receive their Cold Weather Payment.

When will customers get their money?

Customers will generally receive payments within a week of the payment being triggered.

Is Cold Weather Payment the same as a Winter Fuel Payment?

No, the Cold Weather Payment is a separate payment, paid on top of the Winter Fuel Payment.

So what is the Winter Fuel Payment?

Winter Fuel Payments are paid (mostly before Christmas) to those aged over 60. The amount of the Winter Fuel Payment is currently £250 for pensioners aged 60-79 years living alone. (£125 if they share a home with another eligible person). For people aged 80 or over the amount payable is £400 (£200 if they share a home with another eligible person aged 80 or over).