



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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4 February 2019

Ian Lavery MP
House of Commons

Dear Ian

I am writing to advise you of the outcome of the Cold Weather Payments scheme annual review.

The scheme is reviewed after the end of each winter season to ensure that the weather station network remains viable and representative. Expert advice is sought from the Met Office and changes made where appropriate before the start of the next winter period. As part of this, we consider representations made during the previous winter about the suitability of individual weather stations and the links with postcode districts.

Last year we were asked if further consideration could be given to whether the current Cold Weather Payment weather station was the most appropriate for the postcode. The Head of the Met Office National Climate Information Centre reviewed the data for the NE1-13, 15-18, 20-21, 23, 25-46, DH1-7, 9, DL4-5, 14-17, SR1-7, TS21, and TS28-29 postcodes and advised that:

The postcodes, NE22, NE24, NE61-70, are linked to the weather station at Morpeth, Cockle Park which has a winter mean temperature of 4.0 °C. Most of the population within these postcodes reside close to the coasts with winter mean temperatures of 4.4 °C to 4.7 °C. Some of these postcodes extend inland with some rural conurbations, such as Rothbury, having mean temperature of 3.4 °C.

Alternative weather stations exist at Boulmer and Chillingham Barns with mean temperatures of 4.5 °C and 3.8 °C respectively. However, we

recommend that Morpeth, Cockle Park remains the most suitable station for the region overall.

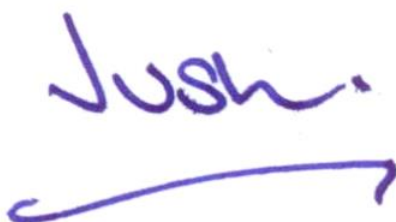
The postcodes NE1-13, 15-18, 20-21, 23, 25-46, DH1-7, 9, DL4-5, 14-17, SR1-7, TS21, and TS28-29 are all linked the weather station at Albemarle with winter mean temperature of 3.3 °C. Most of the population of this region reside in the cities of Newcastle and Sunderland. The cities are closer to the coast, lower lying, and more urban than the Albemarle weather station and consequently have a milder climate, with winter mean temperatures in the range 3.8 °C to 4.9 °C. At the southern extent of the region in question Newton Aycliffe and Shildon in DL5 and DL4 respectively have temperatures of 3.4 °C to 3.6 °C.

In his findings, the Head of the Met Office National Climate Information Centre stated there is a weather station located in Durham, but this has previously not been recommended for use in the cold weather payment service due to vandalism at the site. As there are no other suitable sites available, the current Cold Weather Payment weather stations remain the most suitable.

If you have any further questions, please contact my officials at socialfundstrategy.singlepointofcontact@dwpgsi.gov.uk

I will place a copy of this letter in the House Library.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Justin', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke underneath.

Justin Tomlinson
Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance