

# **Cold Weather Payments: Guidance**

Cold Weather Payments  
Conditions of entitlement  
Claimants living in Scotland  
Retrospective payments  
Overlapping periods  
Moving to Universal Credit

## **Cold Weather Payments**

A Cold Weather Payment (CWP) provides help towards the additional costs of heating a home during periods of unseasonably cold or severe weather. It is for vulnerable people more likely to be affected by the cold such as the elderly, disabled and the very young.

DWP defines severe weather as a recorded or forecast average temperature of zero degrees celsius or less for 7 consecutive days. The Met Office network of weather stations provides this information for postcode districts.

CWPs are payable to eligible claimants living in postcode districts where severe weather has been recorded or forecast. The amount payable is £25 for each 7 day period of severe weather in their district.

The CWP season runs from 1 November to 31 March.

## **Conditions of entitlement**

To receive a Cold Weather Payment (CWP), a claimant must have an award of Universal Credit for at least 1 day during the recorded or forecasted period of severe weather, must be actually residing at an address within the postcode area triggered, and the benefit unit must include one of the following:

- an adult with limited capability for work, limited capability for work and work-related activity or have underlying entitlement
- a disabled child or a qualifying young person who is disabled
- a child aged under 5 years

And where these conditions are met:

- the claimant or any adult in the benefit unit must not be in employment
- the claimant must not be living in accommodation for which a CWP is not payable

If a claimant has met more than one of the eligibility criteria, such as a disabled child and disabled adult in the benefit unit, only one CWP is payable.

If two disabled adults live in the same household but are not part of the same benefit unit, both adults will receive a CWP.

## **Employment**

If any adult in the benefit unit is in employment (paid work or gainful self-employment) for 1 or more days during the 7 day recorded trigger period, a CWP is not paid unless there is a disabled child or a disabled qualifying young person in the benefit unit.

If the trigger is a forecasted one, eligibility is based on whether the adult is in employment when the Met Office notified DWP of the forecasted period of severe weather. If the adult is in employment on that day, a CWP is not paid unless there is a disabled child or a disabled qualifying young person in the benefit unit.

Employment is established from the last declaration made by the claimant. If they have reported that they have started work, they are classed as in employment. This includes zero-hour contracts.

If a trigger occurs within the first 7 days of a claim, contact is made with the claimant to check that they were not employed prior to the claim date (to cover the whole 7 day period). If they were employed on any of the days during the 7 day period, they are not eligible for a CWP.

## **Accommodation**

A claimant is not eligible for a CWP if they are a person without an address or if they live in:

- a care home
- an independent hospital
- establishments run by Abbeyfield Society or by a body affiliated to that society

A claimant who is of no fixed address but provides a care-of or temporary address may qualify if that address is in a triggered area.

## **Claimants living in Scotland**

The Scottish government is responsible for paying the annual 'Winter Heating Payment' to claimants living in Scotland who qualify for it.

The Scottish government may contact Universal Credit to check if someone qualifies, using a WHP SPOC form.

More information is available on the <https://www.mygov.scot/winter-heating-payment> page on <https://www.mygov.scot/>

## **Retrospective payments**

Any retrospective payments can be made up to 26 weeks after the last day of the latest CWP period - this is 31 March.

## **Overlapping periods**

An overlapping period is when a forecasted and recorded period overlaps by one or more days. Eligibility for the CWP is decided using the whole period.

## **Moving to Universal Credit**

Some current Legacy claimants who currently get a CWP may not qualify following migration to Universal Credit. This is because of the employment criteria.

For further information, see ADM chapter L4: Cold Weather Payments.