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HM Treasury

HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
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Andrew Ranger MP
House of Commons

Our ref: MC2025/06747

15 October 2025

Dear Andrew,

I am writing to you to advise of the outcome of the annual review of the Cold Weather Payments scheme 2024-25.

Cold Weather Payments (CWP) help people to meet their additional heating costs during periods of exceptionally cold weather. Payments are targeted at those most vulnerable to the cold including older people in receipt of Pension Credit, disabled adults and children, and families with children under five who receive an income-related benefit.

Every postcode district is linked to one of the 71 weather stations used in the scheme. When the recorded or forecast average temperature at one of the weather stations meets the Cold Weather Payment criterion, a payment is issued automatically to all eligible claimants living in the linked postcode districts. Temperatures are monitored daily by the Met Office during the cold weather season which runs from 1 November to 31 March.

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 are 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.

Following your letter of 20 January about the upland village of Brymbo within the LL11 postcode district, the Met Office has reviewed whether Hawarden Airport was the most appropriate weather station for postcode district LL11.

In its advice, the Met Office stated:

The LL11 postcode district covers the northwestern part of Wrexham, including several of its suburbs such as Stansty and Gwersyllt, as well as larger surrounding villages like Coedpoeth and Brynteg, and smaller settlements including Brymbo. Whilst central Wrexham lies in a relatively low-lying area, the terrain rises steeply to the west, resulting in several elevated communities. This topographical variation contributes to a notable range of climatic conditions across the district.

Although we acknowledge that some claimants live in more remote, colder locations, our approach to postcode-to-weather station linkages prioritises fairness and consistency for the broader claimant population. As such, greater weighting is given to areas where most residents are concentrated.

Currently, LL11 is linked to the Hawarden weather station, located 12 km to the north, which has a winter mean temperature of 5.1°C. This is the geographically closest station to LL11. Other potential alternatives include:

- Rhyl (5.7°C, 39 km to the northwest),*
- Shawbury (4.6°C, 39 km to the southeast), and*
- Lake Vyrnwy (3.5°C, 45 km to the southwest).*

Winter mean temperatures within Wrexham and its suburbs typically range from 5.0°C to 5.2°C. In contrast, elevated villages such as Coedpoeth (4.2–4.5°C), Brynteg (4.6–5.0°C), and Brymbo (4.3–4.4°C) experience cooler conditions, with even lower temperatures in more isolated communities.

Unfortunately, the current scheme does not permit subdivision of postcode districts, requiring a single weather station to represent the entire area. Given that the majority of LL11's population resides in Wrexham and its suburbs—and considering Hawarden's proximity and climatic similarity—it remains the most appropriate station for this district.

Moreover, within the Cold Weather Payment framework we avoid recommending weather station boundaries that would divide contiguous urban areas, to avoid the situation where residents on opposite sides of a street are treated differently. LL11, LL12, and LL13 collectively serve the Wrexham conurbation, where winter mean temperatures in LL12–LL13 range from 5.1°C to 5.3°C. As such, there is limited justification under the current framework to reassign LL11- LL13 to Shawbury.

We recommend that no change is made to weather station postcode linkage in LL11.

As a result, the Met Office has recommended that the LL11 postcode district linkage to the weather station at Hawarden Airport should be maintained for winter 2025/26.

In making its recommendations, the Met Office examined the Geographic Information System database showing postcode areas, weather stations, topography, built-up areas and 1km-gridded winter mean air temperature for 1991-2020. (i.e. the latest 30-year measurement of winter mean temperature used to calculate various weather parameters.)

I have asked for a copy of this letter to be deposited in the house library.

Please do not hesitate to contact my officials via the following email address should you have any questions:

SOCIALFUNDSTRATEGY.SINGLEPOINTOFCONTACT@DWP.GOV.UK

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Torsten Bell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Torsten Bell MP

Minister for Pensions