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HM Treasury

HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
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Harpreet Uppal MP
House of Commons

Your ref: HU02816

Our ref: MC2025/06694

15 October 2025

Dear Harpreet,

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 email of 21 January about the HD4 postcode district, which was not eligible for payments when the nearby postcode district of HD7 was eligible, the Met Office has reviewed whether Sheffield weather station was the most appropriate weather station for postcode district HD4 and whether Bingley weather station was the most appropriate weather station for postcode district HD7.

In its advice, the Met Office stated:

Following an extensive review of postcodes in and around the Spen Valley in this annual review it was recommended that HD4 is reassigned from Sheffield (winter mean temperature 4.8°C) to Bramham (4.3°C). Although Bingley (3.6°C) is the geographically closest station to HD4, HD4 has a winter mean temperature ranging from 3.7-4.7°C which more closely aligns with Bramham. Bingley is deemed too cold to be linked to HD4.

HD7 lies directly to the west of HD4 and is colder, with winter mean temperatures ranging from 3.2-4.5°C. In this case Bingley is deemed the most appropriate weather station for this postcode district as winter mean temperatures align more closely with Bingley than other weather stations. HD7 is closest to both Bingley and Rochdale, but Rochdale is not considered as it lies on the opposing side of the Pennines, a significant topographic barrier, and it is likely that climatic conditions on the opposing side of this barrier will be different.

We recommend that the postcode district HD4 is reassigned from the Sheffield weather station to the weather station at Bramham. We recommend that no changes are made to weather station postcode linkage in HD7.

As a result, the Met Office has recommended that the HD4 postcode district linkage should be moved from Sheffield to the weather station at Bramham and that the current HD7 postcode district linkage to the weather station at Bingley should be maintained for winter 2025/26.

Postcode districts HD1, HD2 and HD4 - HD6 in your constituency will also be moved to the Bramham weather station following a review of the surrounding area. On this, the Met Office has stated:

We now consider the winter mean temperatures of each postcode district within or partly within the Spen Valley constituency that are currently assigned to Sheffield weather station. A range of temperatures is again quoted that cover the main built-up areas within each:

- WF14 (4.3-5.0°C)
- WF15 (4.3-4.7°C)
- WF16 (4.3-4.7°C)
- WF17 (4.0-4.8°C)
- HD5 (4.1-4.9°C)

Whilst these postcodes are geographically closest to Bingley but are currently assigned to Sheffield, their winter mean temperatures are again most closely represented by Bramham bar the southernmost two districts, namely WF14 and HD5, which are marginally better represented by Sheffield although significant portions of these postcodes do more closely match Bramham. It is therefore recommended that WF14-WF17 and HD5 are moved from Sheffield to Bramham.

The above recommendation then leaves remaining Huddersfield postcodes assigned to Sheffield:

- HD1 (4.2-4.9°C),
- HD2 (3.9-5.0°C),
- HD4 (3.7-4.7°C)
- HD6 (4.1-4.8°C))

These are geographically separated from the main block of Sheffield assigned districts and these have temperatures that are best represented by Bramham. It is recommended that HD1, HD2, HD4 and HD6 are also moved from Sheffield to Bramham.

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