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HM Treasury

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Julie Minns MP  
House of Commons

Your ref: JM03679

Our ref: MC2025/19228

15 October 2025

Dear Julie,

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 17 February about the Cold Weather Payment scheme in CA8, the Met Office has reviewed whether Carlisle weather station was the most appropriate weather station for postcode district CA8, and why the current system does not differentiate between urban and rural areas.

In its advice, the Met Office stated:

*CA8 is currently linked to Carlisle weather station, located 14 km to the west, which has a winter mean temperature of 4.7°C. The CA8 postcode district is largely rural and lies on the western side of the Pennine Hills. Its main town is Brampton, where most residents live, with a winter mean temperature of 3.9–4.1°C. Other settlements include the villages of Hayton (4.0–4.3°C) and Heads Nook (4.0–4.2°C) and smaller communities including Castle Carrock (3.7°C) and Gilsland (3.5°C). The whole of CA8 is therefore colder than Carlisle weather station.*

*Alternative weather stations include Redesdale (2.9°C, 48 km northeast) and Shap (3.1°C, 49 km south). However, both are over three times farther from Brampton than Carlisle. Redesdale is also on the opposite side of the Pennines, a significant topographic barrier, and we generally avoid linking postcode districts to stations across such divides as they would typically experience different weather conditions. While Shap is on the same side as CA8, it is significantly colder than most of the district.*

*Given Carlisle's proximity, its location on the same side of the Pennines, and its temperature alignment with Brampton, where most of CA8's population resides, it remains the most appropriate weather station for the district, despite CA8 being slightly colder than Carlisle overall.*

*We recommend that no changes are made to weather station postcode linkage in CA8.*

As a result, the Met Office has recommended that the current CA8 postcode district link to the weather station at Carlisle 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](mailto: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**