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HM Treasury

HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
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Kate Osborne MP
House of Commons

Our ref: MC2025/03975

15 October 2025

Dear Kate,

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 10 January about the Cold Weather Payment scheme in the postcode districts of NE8, NE9, NE10, NE31, NE32, NE34, NE35, NE36 and NE37, the Met Office has reviewed whether Morpeth, Cockle Park Weather Station was the most appropriate weather station for these postcode districts. These postcode districts had been previously linked to the Albemarle weather station, but their linkage was moved to the Morpeth, Cockle Park weather station in 2023-24. This change had not been reflected in the records of the House of Commons Library.

In its advice, the Met Office stated:

Our recommendation from last year concerning the weather station and postcode linkage updates in this area remains unchanged. In the 1991 to 2020 30-year climatology, Albermarle has a much colder winter mean temperature than the area covered by those postcodes, whose winter mean is better represented by Morpeth Cockle Park.

We recommend that no changes are made to weather station postcode linkage in NE8, NE9, NE10, NE31, NE32, NE34, NE35, NE36 and NE37.

As a result, the Met Office has recommended that the current NE8, NE9, NE10, NE31, NE32, NE34, NE35, NE36 and NE37 postcode districts' link to the weather station at Morpeth Cockle Park 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