



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON
SW1H 9DA

ministers@dwp.gov.uk



HM Treasury

HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Sharon Hodgson MP
House of Commons

Your ref: SH42904

Our ref: MC2025/05963

15 October 2025

Dear Sharon,

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 to the Secretary of State about the non-triggering of cold weather payments in Washington, NE37, where triggers would have occurred in previous years, the Met Office has reviewed whether Morpeth, Cockle Park weather station was the most appropriate weather

station for this postcode district. NE37 had been previously linked to the Albemarle weather station, but its linkage was reassigned to the Morpeth, Cockle Park weather station in 2023-24.

In its advice, the Met Office stated:

NE37 is currently assigned to Morpeth Cockle Park, which has a winter mean temperature of 4.3°C. This weather station is 35km to the North-Northwest of NE37. Albemarle is geographically closer to NE37, at 26km West-Northwest, but has a winter mean temperature 3.7°C. The winter mean temperature of the main built-up areas of NE37 are in the range 4.4-4.7°C. Whilst Morpeth is not geographically the closest weather station, it is the most representative in terms of winter mean temperature and it is recommended that NE37 remains assigned to Morpeth.

We recommend that no changes are made to weather station postcode linkage in NE37.

As a result, the Met Office has recommended that the current NE37 postcode district 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, cursive script.

Torsten Bell MP

Minister for Pensions