

## **Help with Fuel Costs**

### **Winter Fuel Payments**

If you have reached the qualifying age you may get a Winter Fuel Payment to help pay for keeping warm in winter. For winter 2011/12 this can be between £100 and £300 depending on your situation.

### **What is the Winter Fuel Payment?**

It is a yearly tax free payment to help people pay for their heating in the winter. Getting the Winter Fuel Payment will not affect any other benefits you may get. This is different to Cold Weather Payments which you may get for each week of very cold weather in your area.

Are you eligible?

You may get a Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2011/12 if:

- you have reached the qualifying age (born on or before 5 January 1951)
- you normally live in Great Britain or Northern Ireland on any day in the week of 19–25 September 2011

You won't qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment if, throughout the week of 19–25 September 2011:

- you were in hospital for more than 52 weeks previously, getting free treatment as an inpatient
- you were in custody serving a court sentence
- you were subject to immigration control and did not qualify for help from the Department for Work and Pensions
- you lived in a care home, an independent hospital or Ilford Park Polish Resettlement Home (and had done so for the previous 12 weeks or more) and you were on Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- If you move to another European Economic Area country you may be able to continue to receive future Winter Fuel Payments. But only if you have already qualified for a Winter Fuel Payment before you move.

How to apply

The claim form for winter 2011/12 will be available on the Direct Gov website from mid August 2011.

If you think you qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment, then you will need to apply.

To apply you can:

complete the claim form on screen or print it out and fill it in with black ink  
get a claim form sent to you from mid August 2011 by calling the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on 0845 9 15 15 15

The completed forms need to be returned to:

Winter Fuel Payment Team  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Unit 16  
Coalfield Way  
Ashby de la Zouch  
LE65 1JF

Can a couple get the Winter Fuel Payment?

If one of you receives Pension Credit, The Pension Service will pay the full amount due to your household. Otherwise, if you share your home with another qualifying person, you will each get a shared payment depending on your situation.

Changes to the qualifying age

The qualifying age for Winter Fuel Payment for both men and women is rising in line with the increase in women's State Pension age.

To reach the qualifying age for a Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2011/12 you will need to be born on or before 5 January 1951.

Winter Fuel Payment – getting paid

The Winter Fuel Payment is automatically given to those who are eligible. Some people will get paid at different times than others. If you do not get a payment by the end of December call The Pension Service in January.

Will it affect your other benefits or taxes?

The Winter Fuel Payment won't affect your other benefits and you won't have to pay Income Tax on it.

What if your circumstances change?

You only need to claim once. After this you should automatically get Winter Fuel Payment each year as long as your circumstances do not change. It's important you call the Winter Fuel Payment helpline if:

- you move home
- you change your bank account details
- move overseas or
- someone else in your household becomes entitled

How much you can get

The amount of Winter Fuel Payment that you can get for winter 2011/12 varies according to your personal situation.

You can check your entitlement at [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/Benefits/BenefitsInRetirement/DG\\_10018657](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/Benefits/BenefitsInRetirement/DG_10018657)

## **Cold Weather Payments**

What are Cold Weather Payments?

During a very cold winter, the costs of heating can quickly add up. If you're receiving certain benefits, you may be able to get a Cold Weather Payment for each period of very cold weather in your area.

You don't need to apply - if you can get a Cold Weather Payment, you'll be paid it automatically.

Cold Weather Payments can help people who are in receipt of certain benefits with their additional heating costs during winter.

A payment will be made for each seven day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March.

A network of weather stations covering the whole of Great Britain gathers temperature information. Payments will be made when the local temperature is either:

- recorded as an average of zero degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days
- forecast to be an average zero degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days

How to apply

You don't need to apply. If you can get a Cold Weather Payment, you'll be paid it automatically. Cold Weather Payments are usually paid into the same bank or building society account as your benefit payments.

After each period of very cold weather in your area, you should receive a payment to your account within 14 working days.

If you don't receive your Cold Weather Payment

Tell your pension centre or Jobcentre Plus if you think you should have received a Cold Weather Payment but you have not had one.

Who can get Cold Weather Payments?

If you are in receipt of Pension Credit, Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), you may also be able to get Cold Weather Payments.

### Pension Credit

If you are in receipt of Pension Credit, you will usually receive Cold Weather Payments.

### Income Support and Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

If you are in receipt of Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you will usually receive Cold Weather Payments if you also have any of following:

- a disability or pensioner premium
- a child who is disabled
- Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element
- a child under five living with you

### Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

If you are in receipt of Income-related ESA, you will usually receive Cold Weather Payments if you also have any of the following:

- the support or work-related component of ESA
- a severe or enhanced disability premium
- a pensioner premium
- a child who is disabled
- Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element
- a child under five living with you

How much do you get?

You will get £25 for each seven day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March. Payments will be made when the average temperature for where you live is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days.