



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# Social Fund Cold Weather Payments for Great Britain

1 November 2014 to 5 December 2014

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# Social Fund Cold Weather Payments for Great Britain from 1 Nov 2014 to 5 Dec 2014

## Summary

This report provides figures on payments under the Cold Weather Payments scheme for the week starting 29<sup>th</sup> November and finishing 5<sup>th</sup> December and the total number of payments made during the 2014/15 season to date.

- For the 2014/15 season, we have estimated that there are 3.8 million eligible recipients of Cold Weather Payments. Of these, 2.1 million, or 55%, are in receipt of Pension Credit.
- No Cold Weather Payments have been made between 29<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014.
- Overall, there have been no Cold Weather Payments in the 2014/15 winter season to date.

## Background

The Social Fund Cold Weather Payments scheme provides help to individuals on benefits who are the most vulnerable to the cold: older people in receipt of Pension Credit, disabled adults and children, and families with children under 5 who are in receipt of an income related benefit (Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support or Universal Credit). Full details on eligibility are available at <https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/eligibility>.

The scheme runs from 1 November to 31 March each year. This is referred to as the Cold Weather Payments season.

The daily average temperatures are measured by the Met Office at a network of 93 weather stations across Great Britain. Each postcode area in the country is linked to the weather station that best reflects that area's climate. The coverage areas for each weather station are determined by the Met Office using long-term climate information and are reviewed each year. Full details of the weather stations included in the 2014/15 scheme, and the coverage areas of each weather station are available in the scheme regulations at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/ukSI/2014/2687>.

A payment of £25 is automatically made to those eligible in the coverage area of each weather station when the average temperature has been recorded as, or is forecast to be, 0 degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days. This is referred to as a trigger. Once there has been a trigger at a weather station, there will be no further payments in that area until a separate seven consecutive days of below freezing weather has been recorded or forecast at that station.

## Performance Overview

Table 1 gives the number of payments and expenditure made in the 2014/15 season up to 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

**Table 1: Summary of 2014/15 Cold Weather Payments to 5 December 2014**

2014/15 Cold Weather Payment figures up to 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Great Britain	Scotland	England	Wales
Triggers	0	0	0	0
Total payments to all recipients	0	0	0	0
Total payments to those in receipt of Pension Credit	0	0	0	0
Total expenditure to all recipients	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total expenditure to those in receipt of Pension Credit	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total recipients: all recipients	0	0	0	0
Total recipients: Pension Credit recipients	0	0	0	0

## Caveats

When using the Cold Weather Payment figures given in this report, the following points should be noted.

- The payment, recipient and expenditure figures used to report Cold Weather Payment statistics throughout the winter are estimates as information on the exact number of payments is not readily available. These figures are produced by determining the volume of eligible recipients in each weather station area at the start of the season and using these figures throughout the winter to estimate payments and expenditure based on the actual triggers recorded. Further details about this are given in the Methodology section below.

- The number of eligible recipients is not necessarily the total number of individuals benefitting from a Cold Weather Payment. Any individuals making a joint claim for one of the qualifying benefits, such as a couple living together, will receive one payment between them rather than one payment each.
- Universal Credit is a qualifying benefit for Cold Weather Payments. These Cold Weather Payments are currently paid clerically. Cold Weather Payments to Universal Credit recipients are not currently included in estimates in this release, due to the small volumes of payments to these claimants expected during 2014/15.

## Methodology

- A scan of the benefit systems is run at the end of October to determine those who are eligible to receive payments in each weather station area at that point.
- Eligibility will change over the winter as potential recipients flow on and off benefits. Adjustments are made to the figures to reflect these flows. Historical differences between the figures estimated at the start of the season and actual payments made at the end of the season are used to adjust the figures from the scan to take this into account. These adjustment figures have been calculated using the 2010/11 season results; this year is the latest for which the actual end-of-season figures is available.
- Finally, the estimated figures produced for each weather station are rounded to the nearest 100. The relatively high rounding is used to allow for the likelihood that the number eligible in each weather station area will vary over the winter.

These figures are used throughout the winter to estimate payment volumes and expenditure based on reported triggers in each weather station area.

## Next Publication

The next update will be on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and will cover Cold Weather Payments recorded up to and including 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

## Contact Details

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