

# **Freedom of Information request 4599/2012**

**Received: 20 November 2012**

**Published: December 2012**

## **Information request**

Which countries do DWP currently send Winter Fuel Payment to?

How is eligibility assessed when receiving Winter Fuel Payment when living abroad?

How much was sent in Winter Fuel Payment to each country overseas in the past year/five years?

How many pensioners living overseas were identified as deceased and had their pension payments stopped last year/over the last five years?

## **DWP response**

I would like to start by explaining the eligibility criteria.

To qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment a person must have reached the relevant qualifying age by the end of the 'qualifying week' and be ordinarily resident in the UK.

The qualifying age is linked to the State Pension age for women, which is increasing gradually. This means that for this winter 2012/13 a person must have been born on or before 5 July 1951.

The qualifying week is the week commencing with the third Monday in September, which, for this winter was 17-23 September 2012.

Some people residing abroad are able to get the Winter Fuel Payment if they meet the eligibility criteria. They must:

- have reached women's State Pension age;
- be ordinarily resident in another European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland; and
- have a genuine and sufficient link with the UK, for example, have lived or worked in the UK for most of their working life.

However, a person is not entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment if during the qualifying week they:

- are in custody under sentence; or
- have been in hospital receiving free in patient treatment for more than 52 weeks prior to the qualifying week.

The following link will provide you with details of countries where Winter Fuel Payments are exported to, along with the number of payments paid in each country and the relevant expenditure:

[http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/wfp\\_eea\\_residents\\_publication.xls](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/wfp_eea_residents_publication.xls)

Please note that the eligibility criterion in respect of EEA/Swiss residents has recently changed. For the years covered by these statistics Winter Fuel Payments could only be made to people in the EEA/Switzerland where that person had been in receipt of the payment before leaving the UK.

Finally you asked 'How many pensioners living overseas were identified as deceased and had their pension payments stopped last year/over the last five year?'

Since 2006, 49,407 pensioners were identified, through various means, as having passed away. It should be noted that there are a number of notifications where a UK State Pension recipient has passed away where statistics are not available (for example where the next of kin notify DWP of the bereavement).