

# Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments 2011/2012



S O C I A L  
S E C U R I T Y  
A G E N C Y

Includes details of residents  
outside the UK but within  
the EEA and Switzerland





## Contents

What is the Winter Fuel Payment?	2
Who qualifies for the Winter Fuel Payment?	2
Who does not qualify for it?	2
How much is the Winter Fuel Payment for 2011-12?	4
How is it paid?	5
When will I get my payment?	6
Do I need to apply?	6
If I need to apply, when should I do so?	7
What if my circumstances change?	7
Changes from winter 2011-12?	8
Can I apply for past winters?	8
Can I receive a Winter Fuel Payment if I live in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland?	9
Cold Weather Payment	10
Other useful information	10
Textphones	13

## What is the Winter Fuel Payment?

It is a yearly tax-free payment to help people of qualifying age (born on or before 5 January 1951) to pay for their heating in the winter. Getting the Winter Fuel Payment will not affect any other benefits you may get.

When you have received your first Winter Fuel Payment, we should pay it automatically every year as long as you still qualify. See 'What if my circumstances change?' on page 7.

### Who qualifies?

You may get a Winter Fuel Payment for winter of 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 (or in some circumstances, in another EEA country or Switzerland).

### Who does not qualify?

You won't qualify for a payment if, during the week of 19-25 September 2011:

- you are in hospital getting free treatment as an in-patient and you have been doing so for more than the previous 52 weeks
- you are in custody serving a sentence set by a court

- immigration control applies to you and you do not qualify for help from the Department for Social Development (for example, you have been allowed into the UK on the understanding that you are supporting yourself and you are not entitled to public funds)
- you live in a residential care home, nursing home or an independent hospital (and have been for the previous 12 weeks or more), and you are getting State Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance.

(Care homes provide accommodation with nursing or personal care, and include residential accommodation. An independent hospital is a hospital which is not a National Health Service hospital.)

## How much is the Winter Fuel Payment for 2011-12?

Circumstances	Born on or before 5 January 1951	Aged 80 or over on or before 25 September 2011
You live alone or are the only person in the household who qualifies	£200	£300
You get State Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance	£200	£300
You live with another qualifying individual	£100	£200 if you are the only person in the household who's aged 80 or over. £150 if you and at least one other person are aged 80 or over
If your partner or civil partner gets State Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance for you both	The payment will be made to the person who gets Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance	The payment will be made to the person who gets State Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance
If both of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you live in a care home, an independent hospital or Ilford Park Polish Resettlement Home</li> <li>• you don't get State Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance</li> </ul>	£100	£150
If both the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you live in a care home, an independent hospital or Ilford Park Polish Resettlement Home (and have done so for 12 weeks or more before the qualifying week)</li> <li>• you get State Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance</li> </ul>	You don't qualify for Winter Fuel Payment	You don't qualify for Winter Fuel Payment

## How is it paid?

If you get State Pension or another benefit (except Housing Benefit or Child Benefit), you will receive your Winter Fuel Payment in the same way as you usually receive your State Pension or benefit.

If you don't get State Pension or another benefit (except Housing Benefit or Child Benefit), we'll pay your Winter Fuel Payment by the method you choose on your claim form.

We'll pay your Winter Fuel Payment:

- into your bank, building society or Post Office card account,
- into some Credit Unions or
- by cheque or payable order sent to your address.

Couples who are both of qualifying age (born on or before 5 January 1951) who qualify and are receiving State Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related ESA will get one payment. We'll pay it to the person receiving that benefit. The other person is not entitled to a payment.

If your partner is under qualifying age and receives certain benefits for you, they will receive the payment.

## When will I get my payment?

If you qualify and make a valid claim on or before 23 September 2011, you should get your payment during November or December 2011. If you apply after 24 September, you may not get the payment until after Christmas. If you haven't received the payment by Christmas, please call the office that pays your benefit, or call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline (see page 10).

## Do I need to apply?

You should automatically get the Winter Fuel Payment **without applying** if you're of qualifying age (born on or before 5 January 1951) by 25 September 2011, and:

- you got a Winter Fuel Payment last winter and you still meet the conditions for getting it, or
- you get State Pension or another benefit (except Housing Benefit or Child Benefit) during the week of 19-25 September 2011.

Otherwise, if you think you qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment, you will need to apply. So this means you will need to apply if you don't get State Pension or if the only benefits you get are Housing Benefit or Child Benefit. Phone the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline for a claim form or get a claim form online (see page 10).

## If I need to apply, when should I do so?

You need to send your completed claim for the 2011-12 payment so that we receive it on or before 30 March 2012.

The claim form will be available from late July 2011. You can find out more from the Winter Fuel Payment helpline (see page 10).

After you have received your first Winter Fuel Payment, we should make the payment automatically every year if you still qualify and your circumstances don't change.

## What if my circumstances change?

It's important to tell the office that deals with your payments if:

- you move home
- someone moves into or out of your household
- you change your bank account details
- you stop getting benefits except Housing Benefit and Child Benefit
- there are any other change of circumstances.

This will ensure you continue to get the right payment and we can keep you informed of any changes.

## Change from Winter 2011-12?

The qualifying age for Winter Fuel Payments will rise gradually from age 60 to 65 between 2010 and 2020. This is to keep in line with changes to the State Pension age for women.

If you first qualify for Winter Fuel Payments in 2011-12 or later this will apply to you. If you already received the Winter Fuel Payment in a previous year you will not be affected.

## Can I apply for past winters?

You can claim for the winters 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000. Phone the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline for a claim form or print one from our website (see page 10).

From 2000-01 onwards, we can consider claims only if we receive them on or before the 30 March after the past winter for which you are claiming.

## Can I receive a Winter Fuel Payment if I live in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland?

You may be able to get a winter fuel payment if you live in the EEA or Switzerland, if you:

- previously qualified for the Winter Fuel Payment before in Great Britain or Northern Ireland, and
- left the UK after 5 January 1998.

If you live in the EEA or Switzerland, you can find out how to qualify for Winter Fuel Payments, and get claim forms, from the International Pension Centre (see page 11).

The EEA consists of:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (who are all members of the European Union (EU)) plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway who are not EU members.

Switzerland is not a member of the EEA but has signed an agreement with EU countries.

## Cold Weather Payment

You may qualify for a Cold Weather Payment for each week of very cold weather in your area if you get State Pension Credit or certain other income-related benefits. Payments are made automatically without the need to claim. If you think you should have received a Cold Weather Payment but you haven't had one or if you have a question about Cold Weather Payments that is not answered in this leaflet, or if you want more advice contact your Pension Centre, Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office or alternatively visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

## Other useful information

### Winter Fuel Payment Helpline

Gives advice on Winter Fuel Payments and making claims.

Phone: **0845 9 15 15 15**

Textphone: **0845 601 5613**.

Lines are open from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

You can find further information and print and fill in a claim form from our website at [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

## International Pension Centre

For information about payments for those living outside Great Britain (England, Scotland, Wales) and Northern Ireland, contact:

Phone: **0191 218 77 77**

Fax: **0191 218 70 21**

Textphone: **0191 218 72 80**

International code: **+44 191**

E-mail:

**[tvp.internationalqueries@thepensionservice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tvp.internationalqueries@thepensionservice.gsi.gov.uk)**

You can write to them at:

**International Pension Centre**

Winter Fuel Payment Team

Room TC 201

Tyneview Park

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE98 1BA

England

UK

## The Pension Service

You can contact The Pension Service for information about your State Pension, and other benefits: Phone: **0808 100 2658** (for new claims) or **0845 601 8821** (for existing claims or general enquiries)

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us via text phone on **0808 100 2198**

### **State Pension Credit**

Phone **0808 100 6165** (for new/repeat claims) or **0845 601 8821** (for existing claims)

Textphone: **0845 60 60 285**

Website: <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk>

## **Textphones - if you have speech or hearing difficulties**

Our textphone numbers are for people who cannot speak or hear clearly. If you don't have a textphone, you could check if your local library or advice centre has one.

Textphones don't receive text messages from mobile phones.

## **For help with heating and insulation improvements to your home**

You can contact the Warm Homes Scheme on the single contact number 0800 988 0559. Calls will be directed to the scheme manager responsible for the area in which the client lives.

## **Important information about this leaflet**

This leaflet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure the leaflet is correct as of August 2011. Some of the information may be oversimplified or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

**This leaflet is available in large print, Braille and on audio tape, you should contact your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office for more details.**

WFPL1 September 2011 © Crown copyright

Produced by the Department for Social Development.

Printed in the UK. September 2011.

Remember that this leaflet is for guidance only. It is not a complete statement of the law. Please also remember that the law can change and this may affect Winter Fuel Payments in the future.