

Social Security Scotland Statistics

Winter Heating Benefits: Statistics for Winter 2023/2024

Key figures

As of 31 March 2024:

- A total of 30,400 Child Winter Heating Payments had been issued for winter 2023/2024.
- The total value of Child Winter Heating Payments issued for winter 2023/2024 was £7.2 million.
- A total of 417,885 Winter Heating Payments had been issued for winter 2023/2024.
- The total value of Winter Heating Payment payments issued for winter 2023/2024 was £23.0 million.

Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering Winter Heating Benefits for winter 2024/2025 will be released in 2025.

Under the Code of Practice for Statistics¹ we publish a timetable of statistical releases for the twelve months ahead².

¹ The Code of Practice for Statistics is available on the [UK Statistics Authority website](#).

² The forthcoming publication timetable is available on the [Social Security Scotland website](#).

Introduction

This publication provides information on recipients of both Child Winter Heating Payment and Winter Heating Payment for winter 2023/2024. This publication covers payments issued to 31 March 2024.

Winter 2023/2024 refers to payments relating to the qualifying week in September 2023 for Child Winter Heating Payment and the qualifying week in November 2023 for Winter Heating Payment.

Child Winter Heating Payment was introduced in November 2020 by Scottish Ministers and is administered by Social Security Scotland. It was previously referred to as Child Winter Heating Assistance. It is an automatic payment for children and young people under 19 which intends to help mitigate the additional heating costs that the households of the most severely disabled children and young people face in the winter months. The payment for winter 2023/2024 was £235.70.

Social Security Scotland assess Eligibility for Child Winter Heating Payment each year. This will depend on what benefits the child or young person is entitled to receive and their circumstances in the week beginning the third Monday in September. This is the 'qualifying week'. To be eligible, children and young people must receive the highest rate of the care component of Child Disability Payment or Disability Living Allowance, or the enhanced rate of the daily living component of Adult Disability Payment or Personal Independence Payment.

Winter Heating Payment replaced the UK Government's [Cold Weather Payment](#) in February 2023. It provides stable and reliable annual support to assist low-income households with their heating expenses each winter. This includes older people, disabled people and families who are responsible for children under the age of five or disabled children. The payment for winter 2023/24 was £55.05.

Social Security Scotland assess eligibility for Winter Heating Payment. This will depend on what benefits clients are receiving and their circumstances from 6 November to 12 November 2023. This is the 'qualifying week'.

Eligibility for Winter Heating Payment depends on a person being resident in Scotland and in receipt of one of the following benefits during the qualifying week:

- Universal Credit
- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance
- Support for Mortgage Interest.

There are also additional qualifying criteria in relation to premiums paid because the person is disabled or has a young or disabled child. The [Background Note](#) has further detail on eligibility.

All tables and charts relating to this publication can be found at the [Social Security Scotland website](#).

The statistics for Child Winter Heating Payment and Winter Heating Payment are being published as Official Statistics in Development, which are defined in the Code of Practice for Statistics as “new official statistics undergoing evaluation. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.” These statistics have not yet been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority, so have not been designated as Accredited Official Statistics³.

³ For more information on Official Statistics in Development, please see the [Office for Statistics Regulation website](#).

Child Winter Heating Payment in Winter 2023/2024

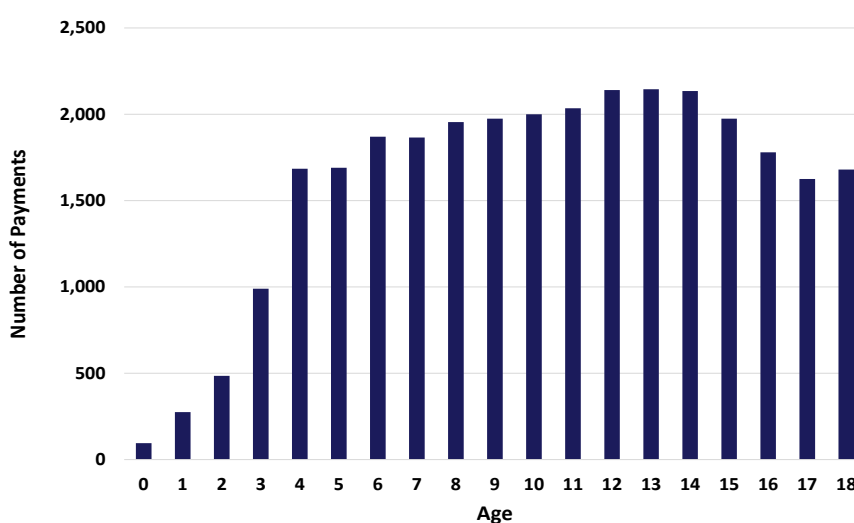
Number of payments

- By 31 March 2024, 30,400 Child Winter Heating Payments had been issued for children or young people eligible in the qualifying week. This ran from Monday 18 September to Sunday 24 September 2023 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 1a, Chart 4**].
- Each payment was for £235.70. The total expenditure for winter 2023/2024 was £7.2 million. The expenditure for winter 2023/2024 was higher than the expenditure for winter 2022/2023, which was £5.8 million [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 1c**].

Payments by child or young person's age

- Overall, the number of children or young people who received payment increased for those between the ages of 4 and 17, compared to the previous winter. The largest decrease, compared to the previous year, was for those aged 18 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 1a**].
- For winter 2023/2024, the number of children in receipt generally increased from age 0 to age 13. Above age 13, the number of children in receipt decreased with age, to age 17. The number of young people in receipt then increased to age 18. [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 1a, Chart 1**].

Child Winter Heating Payment Chart 1: Number of payments by age of child or young person for winter 2023/2024



■ Number of Payments Winter 2023/2024

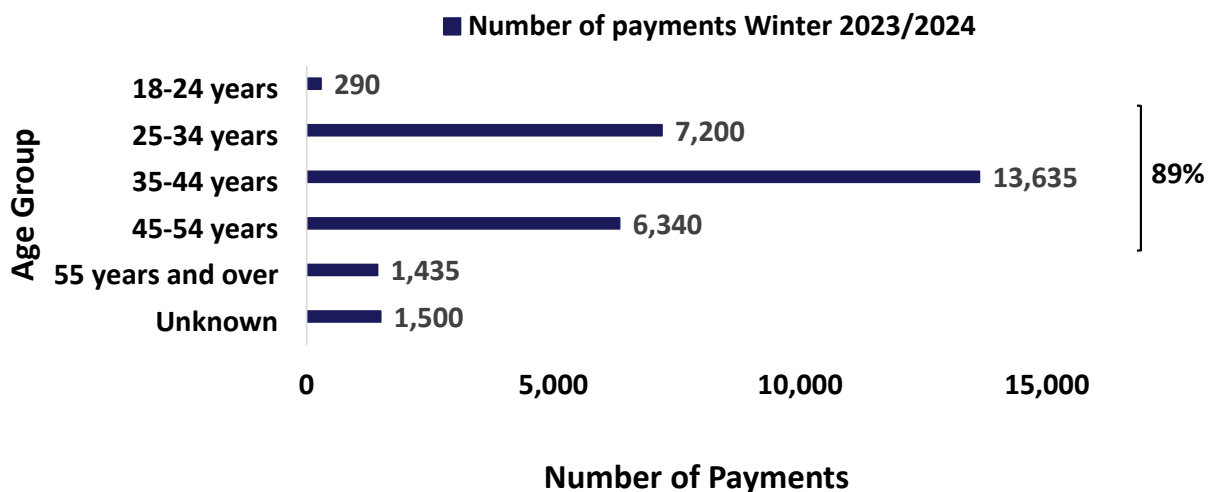
Number of recipients

- In this publication, the word ‘recipient’ is used to describe someone who a Child Winter Heating Payment is issued to, to be used for the benefit of the child or young person. Recipients may include, for example, parents, guardians or organisations acting on behalf of a child or young person. Types of recipients are described further in the [background note](#).
- At least 27,460 different recipients received payment in winter 2023/2024. Of these, 8% received more than one payment [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 2a**].
- There were an additional 540 payments issued where recipient National Insurance Number was missing. It is not possible to determine whether these were an additional 540 different individuals [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 2d**].

Payments by age of recipient

- Around 45% of recipients receiving payment were aged 35 to 44, with around 89% aged 25 to 54 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 3b, Chart 2**]. This is as expected given that many recipients will be parents or guardians of children or young people.

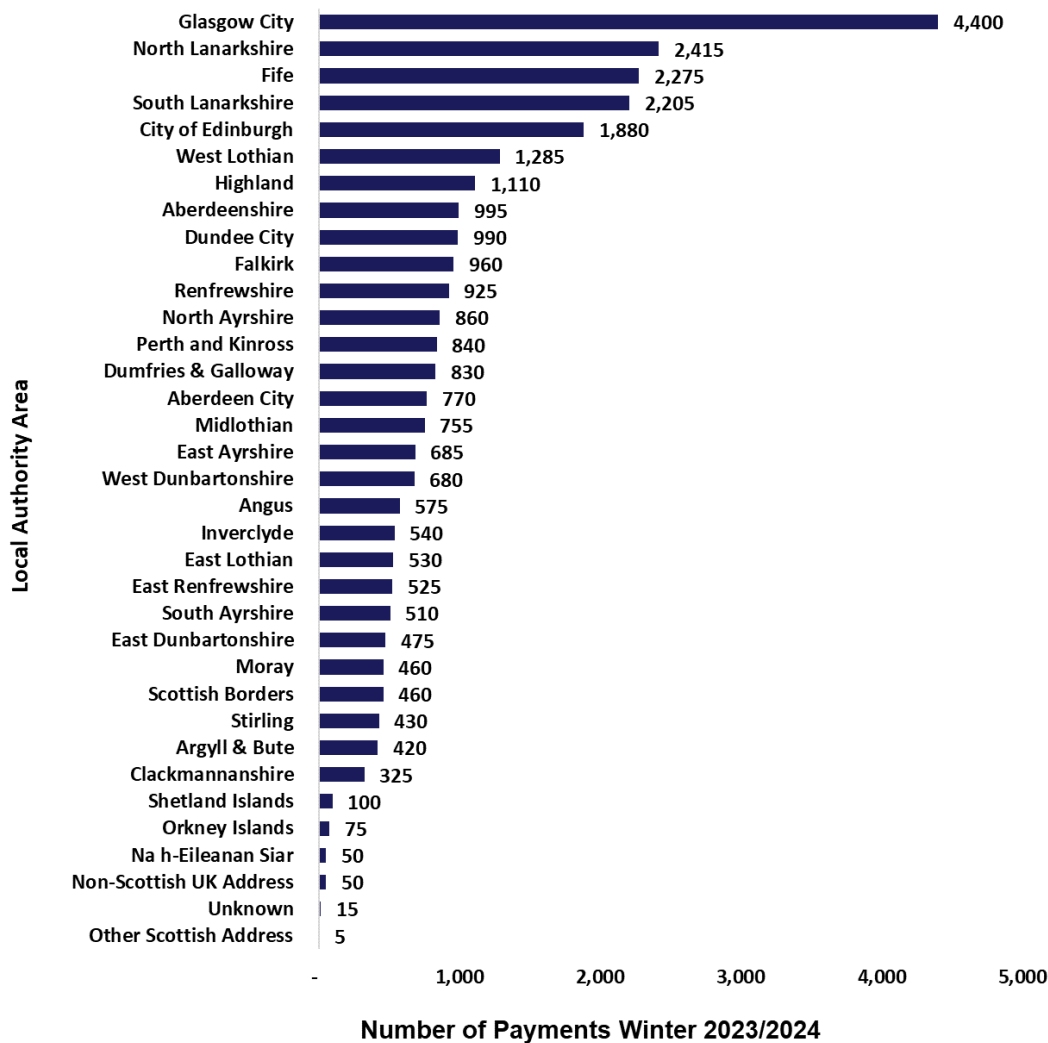
Child Winter Heating Payment Chart 2: Number of payments by age of recipient



Payments by local authority area

- Payments were issued for children living in all 32 local authority areas in Scotland. The local authorities with the greatest proportions of payments were Glasgow City with 14% of payments, North Lanarkshire with 8% and Fife and South Lanarkshire with 7% each [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 4b, Chart 3**].
- A small number of payments were for children or young people with a non-Scottish UK address or where an address could not be matched to a local authority. These payments account for less than one per cent of the total number of payments issued. More information about this can be found in the [data quality section](#).

Child Winter Heating Payment Chart 3: Number of payments by local authority area



Payments by qualifying benefit

- For winter 2023/2024, 28,185 payments were issued for children or young people eligible through Child Disability Payment and 1,055 payments were issued for children or young people eligible through Adult Disability Payment. This accounts for 96% of payments. The remaining 1,160 payments were for children or young people eligible through either Disability Living Allowance for Children or Personal Independence Payment [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 5**].

Payments by month

- For winter 2023/2024, most payments were made by the end of November 2023, with around 98% of payments issued in that month. Around 2% of payments were issued after November 2023 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 6b**].

Payments by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

- For winter 2023/2024, the distribution of payments by socioeconomic status was presented using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles. The proportion of payments was highest for the most deprived decile (decile 1), with 18% of payments issued to that decile. This followed by decile 2, with 15% of payment issued. The proportion of payments issued was lowest for the least deprived decile (decile 10), with 4% of payments.

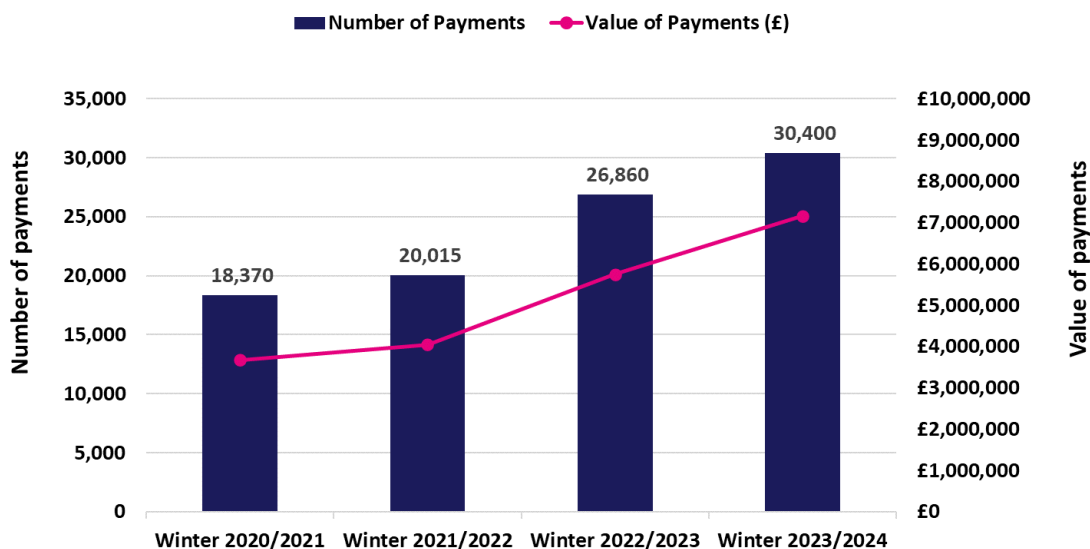
Child Winter Heating Payment since November 2020

- Figures for previous winters have been updated to include payments issued after the last publication of Child Winter Heating Payment statistics, and backdated payments.

Number of payments

- Since November 2020, 95,645 Child Winter Heating Payments have been issued in total. The number of payments issued has increased each year from 18,370 for winter 2020/2021 through to 30,400 for winter 2023/2024 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 6a**]. As explained in the payments section and in the [background note](#), these might yet increase due to payments processed after the publication cut-off date.
- The number of children or young people who received payment for winter 2023/2024 was 3,570 higher than for winter 2022/2023 by 31 March 2024 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 6a, Chart 4**].

Child Winter Heating Payment Chart 4: Number of payments by winter



Value of payments

- In total, £20.6 million has been issued in payments since November 2020. **[Child Winter Heating Payment Table 6a]**. An excerpt from Table 6(a) giving total expenditure for each winter is shown below.

Child Winter Heating Payment Table 6a (excerpt): Child Winter Heating Payments by Time Period

Qualifying period	Payment value	Total Expenditure
Winter 2020/2021	£200.00	£3.7 million
Winter 2021/2022	£202.00	£4.0 million
Winter 2022/2023	£214.10	£5.8 million
Winter 2023/2024	£235.70	£7.2 million

Payments by age of child or young person

- The proportions of children or young people in each age band remained similar, with the exception for age 18 which has decreased from 9% in winter 2022/2023 to 6% in winter 2023/2024 **[Child Winter Heating Payment Table 1b]**.

Multiple children

- The proportion of recipients receiving payment for more than one child or young person has increased slightly over time, from 5% for winter 2020/2021 to 8% for winter 2023/2024 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 2b**].

Payments by recipient age

- The proportion of recipients in each age group was similar for winter 2022/2023 and winter 2023/2024, changing by up to 2% for each age group [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 3b**].

Payments by local authority area

- The proportion of children or young people who received payment in each local authority area was similar for winter 2022/2023 and winter 2023/2024, changing by up to 1% for each local authority area [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 4b**].

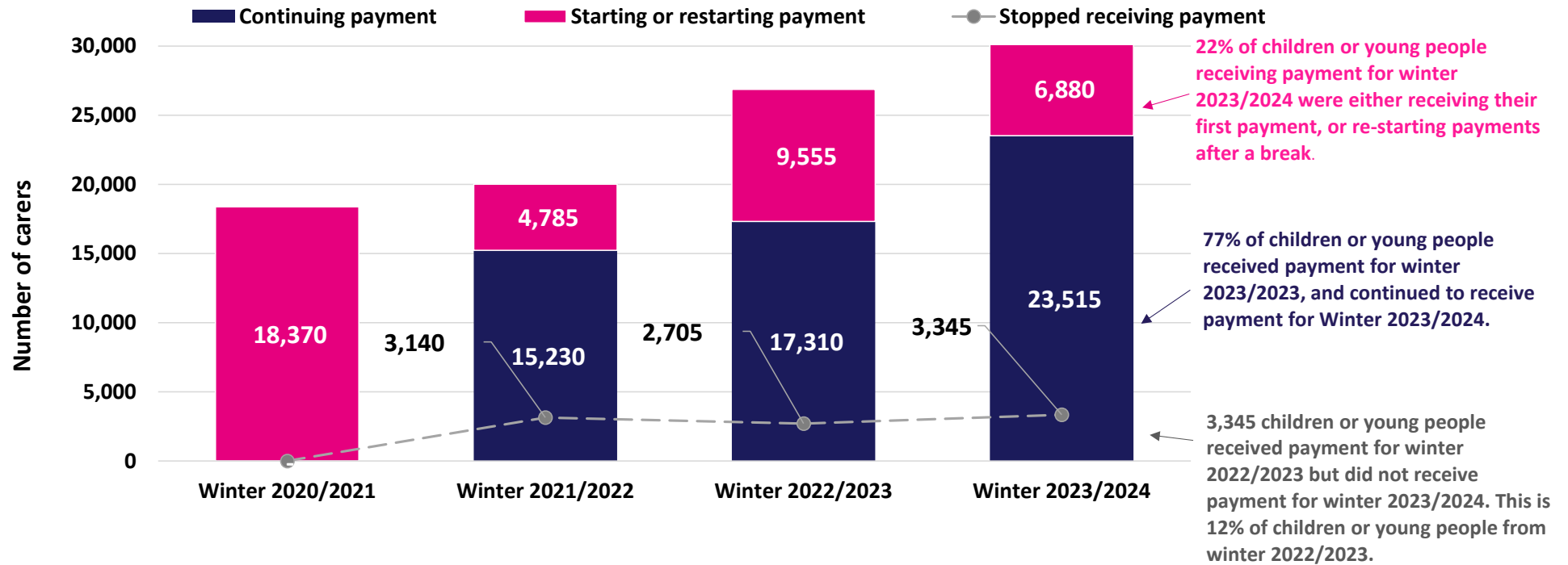
Re-determinations

- From November 2020 to 31 March 2024, 50 re-determinations were recorded for Child Winter Heating Payment, though none were recorded in the latest financial year [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 7a**]. Around 75% of these re-determinations were not upheld [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 7b**].
- Some re-determinations in previous years were likely made in error, as some clients may have mistakenly 'applied' for Child Winter Heating Payment without knowing the payment was automatic. The outcomes of not upheld were mainly due to payment already having been made automatically. The withdrawn re-determination figures indicate where explanations were provided to clients, and they went on to withdraw their re-determination as these were made in error. More information about this can be found in the [data quality section](#).

Children and young people since November 2020

- Of the 30,400 children or young people who received payment for winter 2023/2024, 77% had a payment made for winter 2022/2023 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 8, Chart 5**].
- An additional 22% had a payment made for the first time for winter 2023/2024, and less than 1% restarted receiving payments after a break [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 8**].
- Of the 26,860 children or young people who received payment for winter 2022/2023, 12% were no longer eligible for winter 2023/2024 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 8, Chart 5**].
- These figures may change in future updates to the statistics due to the inclusion of any children and young people who received payments after the cut-off date of the publication.

Child Winter Heating Payment Chart 5: Children or young people by winter



Winter Heating Payment in Winter 2023/2024

Number of payments issued

- By 31 March 2024, 417,885 Winter Heating Payments had been issued for clients eligible in the qualifying week of November 2023 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1**].
- Each payment was for £55.05. The total expenditure for winter 2023/2024 by 31 March was £23.0 million [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1**].
- The number and value of payments issued may increase as payments for Winter 2023/2024 continue to be made after the cut-off date of the publication.

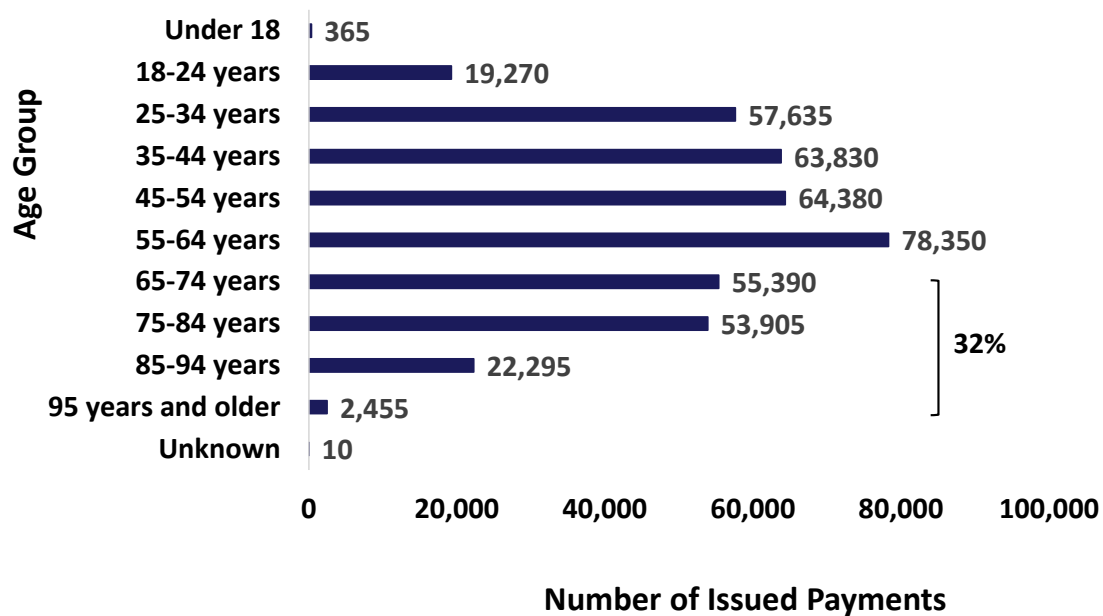
Payments by month

- There were 89,000 payments issued in December 2023, followed by 274,320 payments issued in January 2024. A further 52,520 payments were issued in February 2024 and 2,045 payments issued in March 2024 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1**].
- This corresponds to proportions of around 21% of payments issued in December 2023, followed by 66% payments issued in January 2024, 13% issued in February 2024 and less than 1% issued in March 2024 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1**].

Payments by client's age

- The most common age group of clients receiving Winter Heating Payments was 55 to 64 with 78,350 payments, which was 19% of total payments [**Winter Heating Payment Table 2, Chart 1**].
- Around 32% of recipients receiving payment were aged 65 and over [**Winter Heating Payment Chart 1**].

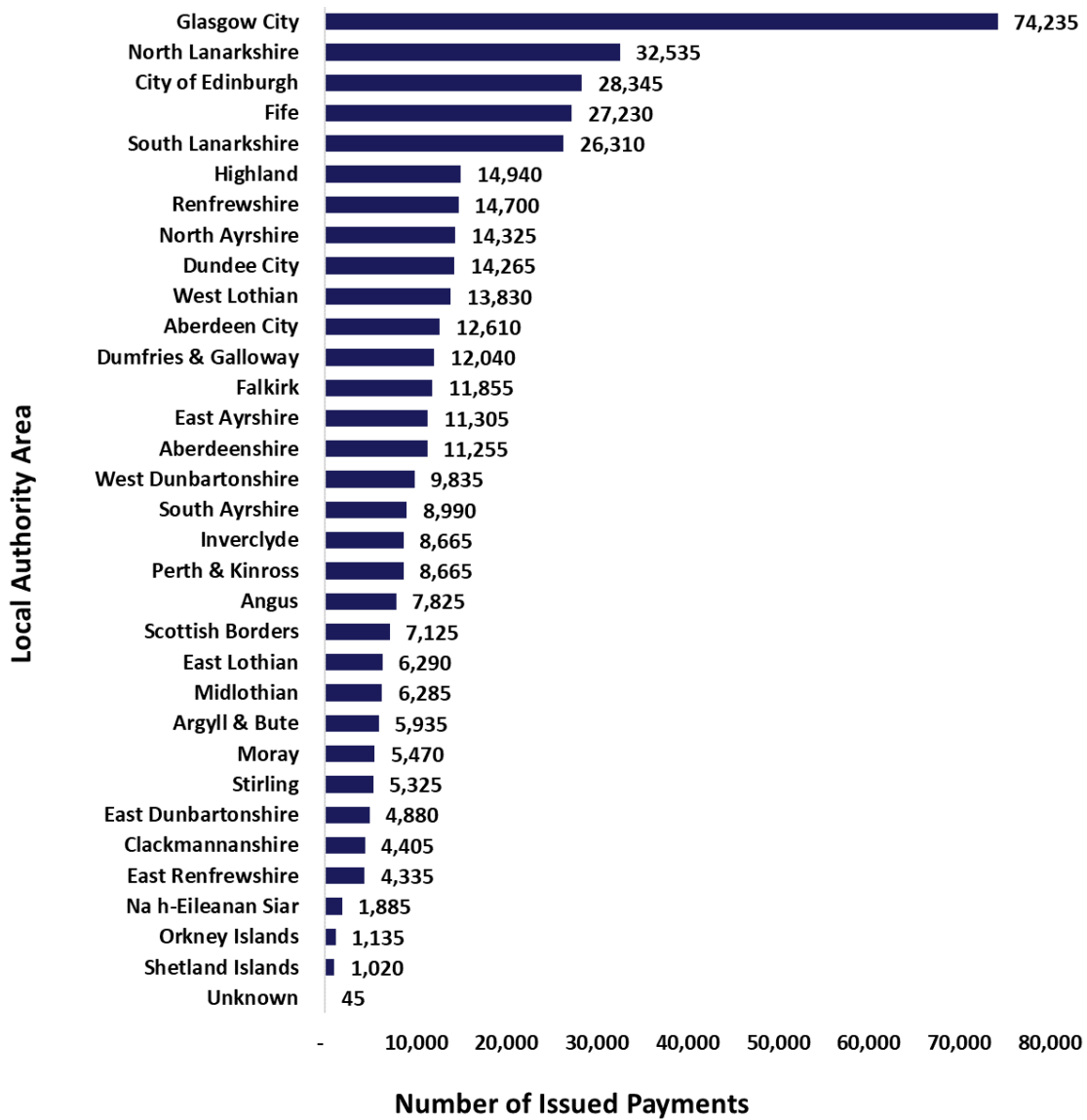
Winter Heating Payment Chart 1: Number of payments by age of client



Payments by local authority area

- Payments for winter 2023/2024 were issued for clients living in all 32 local authority areas in Scotland. The local authorities with the greatest proportion of payments were Glasgow City with 18% of payments, North Lanarkshire with 8% and City of Edinburgh and Fife with 7% each [**Winter Heating Payment Table 3, Chart 2**].
- A small number of payments were for clients for whom the postcode was missing. These payments account for less than one per cent of the total number of payments issued. More information about this can be found in the [data quality section](#).

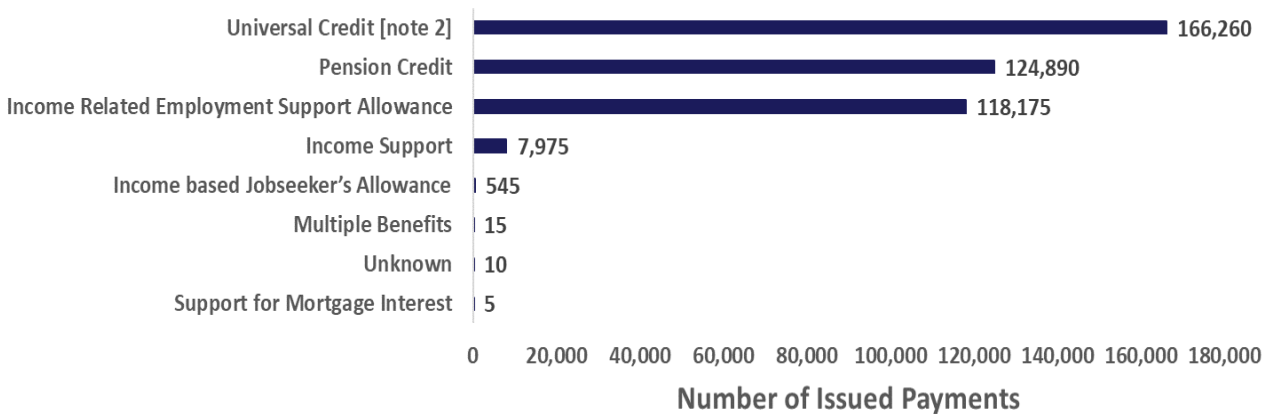
Winter Heating Payment Chart 2: Number of payments by local authority area



Payments by qualifying benefit

- As of 31 March, 40% of payments were issued for clients eligible through Universal Credit. A further 30% of payments were issued for clients eligible through Pension Credit and 28% for clients eligible through Income Related Employment Support Allowance. Around 2% of clients were eligible through Income Support and less than 1% of payments were issued for clients eligible through either Income based Jobseeker’s Allowance, Support for Mortgage Interest or those eligible through multiple benefits. A small number of payments could not be linked to a qualifying benefit **[Winter Heating Payment Table 4, Chart 3]**.

Winter Heating Payment Chart 3: Number of payments by qualifying benefit



Payments by method

- Most eligible clients receive Winter Heating Payment automatically. Clients may also apply for Winter Heating Payment. This includes clients that were not included in the Department for Work and Pensions scan and are making backdated applications for Winter Heating Payment.
- Of the 417,885 payments issued to 31 March 2024 for winter 2023/2024, 415,790 payments were for clients whose cases had been transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions. A further 1,130 payments were for clients who applied for Winter Heating Payment by phone and 100 payments were for clients who applied for Winter Heating Payment with a paper form. Another 860 payments were for clients who have applied the previous winter and remained eligible for payment **[Winter Heating Payment Table 5]**. A table with numbers of payments by method is presented below.

Winter Heating Payment Table 5a (excerpt): Winter Heating Payments by Application Method

Method	Transfer	New Application - Phone	New Application - Paper	Previous applicants who remained on caseload
Number of Payments	415,790	1,130	100	860

Applications received and processed

- As of 31 March 2024, 1,740 new applications had been received for winter 2023/2024. By 31 March, 1,585 applications had been processed, 81% of which were approved and 18% were denied **[Winter Heating Payment Table 6]**.
- Of the applications received, the majority were received across February and March 2024, with 625 received in February and 745 in March **[Winter Heating Payment Table 6]**.

Application Channel (Method of Application)

- In total, 1,560 winter 2023/2024 applications were made through a telephone application and 180 were made through paper application **[Winter Heating Payment Table 7]**.
- The [About the data](#) section has further information about the application channel data.

Processing Times

- The processing times presented below relate only to manual applications and not to the automated payments. Payments resulting from manual applications form a small subset of total payments.
- The median average⁴ processing time for applications processed was one day for each month from December 2023 to February 2024 and two days for March 2024 **[Winter Heating Payment Table 8]**.
- Processing times were calculated by determining the time between an application being received and a decision being made, or the application being withdrawn. This includes the time spent waiting to receive evidence from clients to allow a decision to be made, which should be considered when interpreting these processing times. See the [about the data](#) section for further information on processing times.

⁴ The median average is the middle value of an ordered dataset, or the point at which half of the values are higher and half of the values are lower.

Payments by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

- For winter 2023/2024, the distribution of payments by socioeconomic status was presented using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles. The proportion of payments was highest for the most deprived decile (decile 1), with 24% of payments issued to that decile. This followed by decile 2, with 18% of payments issued. The proportion of payments issued was lowest for the least deprived decile (decile 10), with 2% of payments.

Winter Heating Payment since February 2023

Number of payments

- Since February 2023, 815,995 Winter Heating Payments have been issued in total. The number of payments issued has increased from 398,115 for winter 2022/2023 to 417,885 for winter 2023/2024 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1a**]. As explained in the payments section and in the [background note](#), these might yet increase due to payments processed after the publication cut-off date.
- The number of clients who received payment for winter 2023/2024 was 19,770 higher than for winter 2022/2023 by 31 March 2024 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1a**].

Value of payments

- In total, £42.9 million has been issued in payments since February 2023. [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1a**]. An excerpt from Table 1(a) giving total expenditure for each winter is shown below.

Winter Heating Payment Table 1a (excerpt): Winter Heating Payments by Time Period

Qualifying period	Payment value	Total Expenditure
Winter 2022/2023	£50.00	£19.9 million
Winter 2023/2024	£55.05	£23.0 million

Payments by age of client

- The proportions of clients in each age band have remained similar, with the most marked change being that of the proportion for age 25-34 year which has increased from 12% in winter 2022/2023 to 14% in winter 2023/2024 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 2b**].

Payments by local authority area

- The proportion of clients who received payment in each local authority area is similar for winter 2022/2023 and winter 2023/2024, changing by up to 1% for each local authority area [**Winter Heating Payment Table 4b**].

Payments by qualifying benefit

- The proportion of clients who received payment qualified through Universal Credit increased from around 34% for winter 2022/2023 to 40% for winter 2023/2024. Conversely, the proportion of those qualified through Income

Related Employment Support Allowance decreased from around 32% for winter 2022/23 to 28% for winter 2023/2024. Proportions of clients who received payments qualified through other benefits were similar for both winter 2022/2023 and winter 2023/2024 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 4b**].

Re-determinations

- From February 2023 to 31 March 2024, 45 re-determinations were recorded for Winter Heating Payment, though none were recorded in the financial year 2022/2023 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 9a**]. Around 61% of these re-determinations were not upheld [**Winter Heating Payment Table 9b**].

Background to Child Winter Heating Payment

Child Winter Heating Payment was introduced in November 2020 by the Scottish Government. This type of assistance is not available anywhere else in the UK. It is paid once a year by Social Security Scotland. The payment for winter 2020/2021 which was the first winter covered was £200. Since then, the payment has been uprated every year and was £235.70 for winter 2023/2024.

Children and young people in Scotland can get the assistance if they are under 19 years old and get one of the following qualifying benefits:

- highest rate of the care component of Child Disability Payment
- highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance for children
- enhanced rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment
- enhanced rate of the daily living component of Adult Disability Payment.

They must be getting this on at least one day in the week starting with the third Monday of September (called the 'qualifying week'). In 2023, this was Monday 18 September to Sunday 24 September.

If a child or young person gets a qualifying benefit but did not live in Scotland between 18 September and 24 September 2023, they might still qualify if they:

- are habitually resident in [Switzerland or certain European Economic Area \(EEA\) countries](#) specified in the Schedule of the Winter Heating Assistance for Children and Young People (Scotland) Regulations (2020); and
- can show they have a genuine and sufficient link to Scotland.

If a child or young person is entitled to one of the qualifying benefits but this was not being paid in the qualifying week, they might still be entitled to Child Winter Heating Payment. It depends on why payments were not being issued that week. If this was because the child or young person was staying in residential care or was in hospital, they will still get Child Winter Heating Payment.

Child Winter Heating Payment is not means-tested. If there is more than one child or young person who qualifies in the household, they each get a payment for the full amount.

The majority of Child Winter Heating Payments are issued automatically without requiring an application. In limited circumstances, clients may have to apply for it. This could apply for example, when a child or young person no longer lives in Scotland but has a link to Scotland such as having been to school or nursery or received an education in Scotland.

Clients may also need to apply for Child Winter Heating Payment if they receive a backdated Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment award for the qualifying week. In these circumstances clients may apply by phone or by completing a paper form.

Social Security Scotland is working to identify clients who have become eligible for Child Winter Heating Payment through Child Disability Payment after the Child Winter Heating Payments were issued, and automatically send them their backdated payments. However, if a client receives a backdated Child Disability Payment award for the qualifying week, they may also apply for Child Winter Heating Payment themselves at this time. In these circumstances clients may apply by phone or by completing a paper form.

People receiving Child Winter Heating Payment can include:

- young people aged 16 to 18 who manage their own money
- someone with parental rights and responsibilities (e.g. parents, guardians)
- an appointee – either a personal acting body (someone who acts on behalf of an individual e.g. an informal kinship carer) or a corporate acting body (an organisation that acts on behalf of the child or young person e.g. a solicitor, local authority or third sector organisation).

In this publication, the word 'recipient' is used to describe someone who a Child Winter Heating Payment was issued to, to be used for the benefit of the child or young person.

Further information on the qualifying benefits of Child Disability Payment, Adult Disability Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment can be found in the respective statistics publications on [Social Security Scotland](#) website.

Background to Winter Heating Payment

Winter Heating Payment was introduced in February 2023 by the Scottish Government. It replaced the UK Government's [Cold Weather Payment](#). It is paid once a year by Social Security Scotland. The payment for winter 2023/24 was £55.05.

This support aims to ease some of the impact of additional domestic heating costs in winter by providing targeted, reliable financial support to households with low incomes, who have a greater need for household heat, including people who are of pension age, a disabled adult or a family who have responsibility for either a child under the age of 5 or a disabled child.

Unlike the Cold Weather Payment, Winter Heating Payment does not depend on how cold the temperature gets. Removing the reliance on weather conditions means that every person identified as requiring that additional support will receive it.

Eligibility for Winter Heating Payment is assessed by Social Security Scotland. Clients in Scotland can get the assistance if they get one of the following qualifying benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance
- Support for Mortgage Interest.

They must be getting this on at least one day in the qualifying week. In 2023, this was 6 November to 12 November 2023. They must also meet one other specific requirement of their qualifying benefit.

For Universal Credit, clients also have to have any of the following additional requirements:

- a limited capability for work element
- a limited capability for work element with a work related activity element
- young person disability element or
- a child under 5.

For Pension Credit, clients do not need any other additional requirements.

For Income based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support, clients also have to have any of the following additional requirements:

- a disability premium
- a severe disability premium
- a pensioner premium
- a child disability premium
- the disability element of Child Tax Credit or
- a child under 5.

For Income Related Employment Support Allowance, clients also have to have any of the following additional requirements:

- placed in a support group or a work related activity group
- a severe or enhanced disability premium
- a pensioner premium
- the disability element of Child Tax Credit or
- a child under 5.

For Support for Mortgage Interest, clients also have to have any of the following additional requirements:

- a disability premium
- a pensioner premium
- a child disability premium
- the disability element of Child Tax Credit, or
- a child under 5.

The vast majority of Winter Heating Payments are issued automatically without requiring an application. In limited circumstances clients may have to apply for Winter Heating Payment. This can be done over the phone, by submitting a paper form or in person.

About the data

How data is collected

Social Security Scotland identifies children or young people in payment of the highest rate of the care component of Child Disability Payment or enhanced rate of the daily living component of Adult Disability Payment during the qualifying week to issue their Child Winter Heating Payment.

For winters 2020/2021 through to 2022/2023 the Department for Work and Pensions ran a scan of the information they held on those in payment of the highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance or the enhanced rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment during the qualifying week, with the necessary data then securely transferred to Social Security Scotland to allow them to issue Child Winter Heating Payment.

For winter 2023/2024, the Department for Work and Pensions sent a manual file with records of children or young people thought to be eligible but not yet transferred to be in receipt of Child Disability Payment or Adult Disability Payment. There will be no future scans by the Department for Work and Pensions.

A small number of clients may also apply for Child Winter Heating Payment separately through a paper form or by telephone. This includes clients who are making backdated applications for Child Winter Heating Payment.

For Winter Heating Payment, the Department for Work and Pensions runs a scan of the information they hold on those residents in Scotland during qualifying week who were also in receipt of the qualifying benefit and fulfil additional criteria. The Department for Work and Pensions then securely transfers the necessary data to Social Security Scotland to allow them to issue Winter Heating Payments. For winter 2023/2024 payments, two files were transferred by the Department for Work and Pensions to Social Security Scotland, one in December 2023 and one at the end of January 2024.

Clients may also apply for Winter Heating Payment separately through a paper form, by telephone or in person. This includes clients that were not included in the Department for Work and Pensions scan and are making backdated applications for Winter Heating Payment.

All Winter Heating benefit cases and payments are managed through the Social Security Scotland case management system. A cut of data was extracted from the case management system on 2 April 2024. This includes information about each case that has been created in the system since the introduction of both Child Winter Heating Payment in November 2020 and Winter Heating Payment in February 2023 to 31 March 2024. An additional data cut including information on re-determinations was extracted on 8 April 2024 and information necessary for determining Child Winter Heating Payment qualifying benefit was extracted on 11 April 2024.

Data quality

Payments

This publication presents data for Winter Heating Benefits cases where a payment value had been recorded on the case management system by 31 March 2024. A recorded payment value indicates that a client had been found to be eligible, and that an instruction had been sent to Social Security Scotland finance to make a payment. The majority of recipients for winter 2023/2024 were paid by 31 March 2024. It can take up to four working days for payments to reach recipients' accounts once issued, so it is possible that a small number of payments had not been received by this date.

Missing and duplicate information

The data comes from 100% data cut of the Winter Heating Payment and Child Winter Heating Payment cases on the Social Security Scotland case management system. National Insurance Number and child reference number are 'hashed', or turned into a string of letters and numbers that analysts cannot use to identify people but can be used as a unique anonymous reference for clients. Where duplicate records were discovered, they were investigated and if deemed a result of technical error excluded from the analysis. Records where information used to produce table breakdowns was missing were classed in the tables as 'Unknown'.

Age

For Child Winter Heating Payment, age of children or young people and recipients is based on age at the start of the qualifying week. Age of Winter Heating Payment clients is also based on age at the start of the qualifying week. In a small number of cases age band is 'unknown'. This is due to an error in date of birth (e.g. recipient date of birth recorded in place of child date of birth) or a missing date of birth.

Local Authority

Payments are assigned to local authority by the residential postcode of the child or young person in case of Child Winter Heating Payment, and that of client for Winter Heating Payment, using a Scottish Government lookup file. A small number of payments could not be matched to local authority due to their supplied postcodes not matching the lookup file. Some of these postcodes were identified as being in Scotland, and may relate to new builds with newly created postcodes. A small number of postcodes were missing.

For Child Winter Heating Payment, some of the postcodes matched to other areas within the UK, outside of Scotland. This may be, for example, where a child has moved since the qualifying week, or where a child has a genuine and sufficient link to Scotland.

Postcodes reflect the latest address of clients and may not be the same as the address at the qualifying week. Therefore a small number of addresses may not reflect the correct local authority at the time of application, decision or payment.

Rounding

Number of payments have been rounded to the nearest five payments for disclosure control. Value of payments have been rounded to the nearest £1,000 for Child Winter Heating Payment and to the nearest £500 for Winter Heating Payment for disclosure control. Different rounding of the value of payments was reflective of the size of respective benefits. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest 1%. Data has been suppressed where it would disclose fewer than five payments.

Backdating

Number of payments for each winter can increase in subsequent publications due to some payments being processed after the publication cut-off date. Most recent publication always contains the most up to date figures.

Re-determinations

Winter Heating Payment and Child Winter Heating Payment applicants can ask Social Security Scotland to look again at what they have decided if their application is denied. This is known as a re-determination. A request for a re-determination should be made within 31 calendar days of being notified of the determination. This is extended to up to 1 year under extenuating circumstances. Social Security Scotland then has 16 working days to make the new determination. Applicants also have the right to appeal to a Tribunal if they do not agree with Social Security Scotland's re-determination, or if Social Security Scotland is not able to make a re-determination within 16 working days.

Social Security Scotland has a working agreement that allows it to offer an extension of 5 days to clients should they be waiting on documentation/evidence being sent in. This is to allow Social Security Scotland to process a client application rather than make a decision without any evidence.

For Child Winter Heating Payment, eligible children and young people were sent letters by Social Security Scotland to notify them of the payment. Some clients mistook this letter for a reminder to apply. It is an automatic payment and does not require an application. The outcomes of not upheld were mainly due to payment already having been made automatically. The withdrawn re-determination figures indicate where explanations were provided to clients and they went on to withdraw their re-determination as these were made in error.

Child Winter Heating Payment - Multiple children

For Child Winter Heating Payment, recipients that received payments for more than one child or young person have been identified based on hashed National Insurance Number. Recipients with missing National Insurance Number have been excluded from this analysis.

Winter Heating Payment - Qualifying benefit

The qualifying benefit information is based mainly on the data file provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. Whilst the data file contains a small number of clients being qualified through multiple benefits, it is possible that the total number of such clients is higher.

Winter Heating Payment – Channel

Winter Heating Payment clients can apply over the phone, by submitting a paper form or in person. For winter 2023/2024 there were no in-person applications

Related publications

Statistics published by Social Security Scotland can be found at:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/about/statistics/social-security-scotland-statistics-publications>

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot

are available via an alternative route. Summary tables are available at:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/about/statistics/social-security-scotland-statistics-publications>

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot for further information.

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