

Social Security Scotland Statistics

Winter Heating Benefits: Updated Statistics for Winter 2023/2024

Key figures

As of 31 October 2024:

- A total of 33,230 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 £7.8 million.
- A total of 453,745 Winter Heating Payments had been issued for winter 2023/2024.
- The total value of Winter Heating Payment payments issued for winter 2023/2024 was £25.0 million.

Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering Winter Heating Benefits for winter 2024/2025 will be released on 29 April 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 an update to statistics published in April 2024, which covered to 31 March 2024. This updated publication now includes payments made up to 31 October 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.

Further background information on the benefits, eligibility, and data sources can be found in the [background section](#).

Child Winter Heating Payment now has a process in place to ensure anyone who is retrospectively eligible is identified and paid without the client needing to contact Social Security Scotland. Adult Disability Payment or Child Disability Payment being approved and backdated to the date the application was received has resulted in clients becoming retrospectively eligible for Child Winter Heating Payment. Social Security Scotland undertake regular checks to identify those clients whose backdated qualifying benefit covers the Child Winter Heating Payment qualifying week. This ensures that these eligible clients are automatically paid.

For Winter Heating Payment, additional clients were identified as being eligible for payment in 2023/2024 as a result of new information supplied by the Department for Work and Pensions. Social Security Scotland processed the information received and as a result payments of £55.05 started to be issued to clients from October 2024. Payments were issued to clients whose eligibility had been missed and to clients who became eligible due to backdated qualifying benefits.

All tables relating to this update can be found at the [Social Security Scotland website](#). This update covers a subset of the previously published tables. Any tables that have not been included in this publication will be updated as part of the next Official Statistics publication in April 2025.

The updated 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, Winter 2023/2024

Number of payments

- By 31 October 2024, 33,230 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**].
- Each payment was for £235.70. The total expenditure for winter 2023/2024 was £7.8 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 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 1b**].

Payments by month

- For winter 2023/2024, most payments were made by the end of November 2023, with around 90% of payments issued in that month. Around 10% of payments were issued after November 2023 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 2b**].

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 and value of payments

- Since November 2020, 98,460 Child Winter Heating Payments have been issued in total. The number of payments issued has increased each year from 18,365 for winter 2020/2021 through to 33,230 for winter 2023/2024 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 2b**].
- The number of children or young people who received payment for winter 2023/2024 was 6,370 higher than for winter 2022/2023 by 31 October 2024 [**Child Winter Heating Payment Table 2b**].

- In total, £21.3 million has been issued in payments since November 2020 **[Child Winter Heating Payment Table 2b]**.

Winter Heating Payment in Winter 2023/2024

Number of payments issued

- By 31 October 2024, 453,745 Winter Heating Payments had been issued for clients eligible in the qualifying week of November 2023 **[Winter Heating Payment Table 1a]**.
- Each payment was for £55.05. The total expenditure for winter 2023/2024 by 31 October 2024 was £25.0 million **[Winter Heating Payment Table 1a]**.

Payments by month

- There were 88,995 payments issued in December 2023, followed by 274,220 payments issued in January 2024 and 52,485 payments in February 2024. A total of 2,910 payments were issued between March and September. A further 35,130 payments were issued in October 2024, following additional information being provided by Department for Work and Pensions **[Winter Heating Payment Table 1b]**.
- This corresponds to proportions of around 20% of payments issued in December 2023, followed by 60% payments issued in January 2024 and 12% issued in February 2024. Less than 1% was issued from March to September, with 8% issued in October 2024 **[Winter Heating Payment Table 1b]**.

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 2b]**.

Payments by qualifying benefit

- As of 31 October 2024, 44% of payments were issued for clients eligible through Universal Credit. A further 28% of payments were issued for clients eligible through Pension Credit and 26% for clients eligible through Income Related Employment Support Allowance **[Winter Heating Payment Table 3b]**.

Winter Heating Payment since February 2023

Number and value of payments

- Since February 2023, 851,985 Winter Heating Payments have been issued in total. The number of payments issued has increased from 398,240 for winter

2022/2023 to 453,745 for winter 2023/2024 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1a**].

- The number of clients who received payment for winter 2023/2024 was 55,505 higher than for winter 2022/2023 by 31 October 2024 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1a**].
- In total, £44.9 million has been issued in payments since February 2023. [**Winter Heating Payment Table 1a**].

Payments by qualifying benefit

- The proportion of clients who received payment qualified through Universal Credit increased from around 34% for winter 2022/2023 to 44% 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 26% for winter 2023/2024 [**Winter Heating Payment Table 3b**].

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 or Adult 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 or Adult 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. In October 2024, additional clients were identified as being eligible for payment in 2023/2024 as a result of new information supplied by the Department for Work and Pensions.

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 3 November 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 October 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 October 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 October 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'.

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.

Updated information on re-determinations will be included within the April 2025 statistics release.

Winter Heating Payment - Qualifying benefit

The qualifying benefit information for Winter Heating Payment 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.

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.

☐ cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

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